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The Newspaper for Members of the National Education Association

'96 Election

This fall, Barbara Rohr will vote as if her students' future depends on it.

It does.

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NEA College Loans *Now Available*

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NEA Today

October 1996
Volume 15, Number 3

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recycled paper

What's Our Obligation To Inner-City Children?

President's Viewpoint

Late at night, driving through one of Washington's poorest neighborhoods, I caught sight of several children hanging out on a street corner. It's an all too common reality in inner-city D.C.—young kids on mean streets, aimless, unattended, effectively parentless.

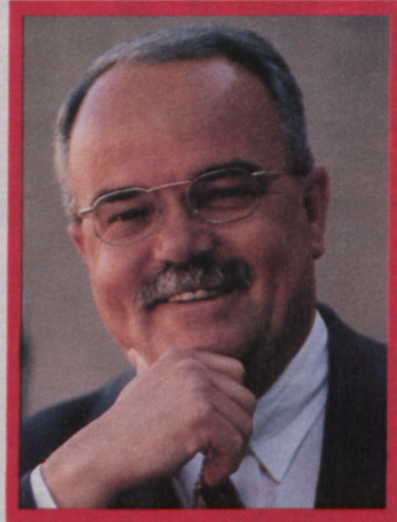
As a parent, I reacted with compassion and concern. But as an educator, I reacted with anger—outrage at the unfairness of these children's fate.

Do we have an obligation to these children? By "we," I mean specifically us, the 2.2 million members of the National Education Association.

Bear in mind, the majority of NEA members have the good fortune of working in successful, mostly suburban, school districts. And heretofore we have tended to disassociate ourselves from cities and their often troubled schools. The not-so-subtle message has been that "our" schools are good, "theirs" are full of problems.

This arms-length detachment is now officially ended. Last month, NEA launched its new Urban Project as an act of both symbolism and substance. Symbolically, it is an affirmation of our Association's dedication to the success of all public schools. And substantively, it entails a commitment of significant NEA resources and expertise to confronting the challenges of America's cities.

The Urban Project is not solely about schools. Rather, its mission is to create new ways of addressing the extraordinary needs of inner-city children. Indeed, the Urban Project itself will be an exemplar of broad-based



Joe Di Dio

Bob Chase

collaboration, with leaders from NEA's urban affiliates teaming up with experts and activists from a broad array of national organizations.

We will explore new types of schools and classrooms, new curricula and extra-curricular activities attuned to the urban condition, and new standards for academic achievement and student conduct. In addition, we will design more effective ways of coordinating social, human, and health services to ensure that children are physically and psychologically ready to achieve in school.

Our Urban Project must not be limited to issues of money and material needs. Even more importantly, it must confront the crisis of spirit—the debilitating sense of hopelessness—in inner-city communities. After all, the failure of poor urban children is not innate; it is instilled. It is planted like a bad seed in their impressionable young minds by a society that seems to have abandoned them.

Two years ago, Charles Murray's notorious book *The Bell Curve* described an underclass of 12 million-plus Americans whose children, according to Murray, are mostly born dumb and, therefore, are destined to die poor. Acting on this grotesque premise, Murray advocated taking money from Head Start and Title 1, and redirecting it to programs for the gifted and talented.

Others propose a different type of abandonment—tuition vouchers to siphon the best students away from urban public schools.

But surely the most insidious message of abandonment comes from some of our own colleagues—educators who communicate to inner-city children that they are not capable, not worthy of the same high expectations as suburban kids.

Our Association must not be complicit in these acts of abandonment. Through the Urban Project, we will join forces with pioneers who are already achieving big things in city schools. They are demonstrating that just as community services can be better coordinated to support the goals and work of school, so schools can be a rallying point for reinvigorating urban communities.

Above all, we must communicate to inner-city children a powerful message of hope and possibility. Let us believe in all of America's children, every one of them worthy, precious, and capable of ambitious learning.

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Did You Know?

The dollars NEA members voluntarily contribute to NEA-PAC, NEA's political action arm, help individual NEA members—of both major parties—afford the cost of serving as delegates to the national political conventions. In 1996, the number of NEA members serving as delegates or alternates to the Republican National Convention went up 25 percent over 1992. The number of members at the Democratic National Convention was up 10 percent.

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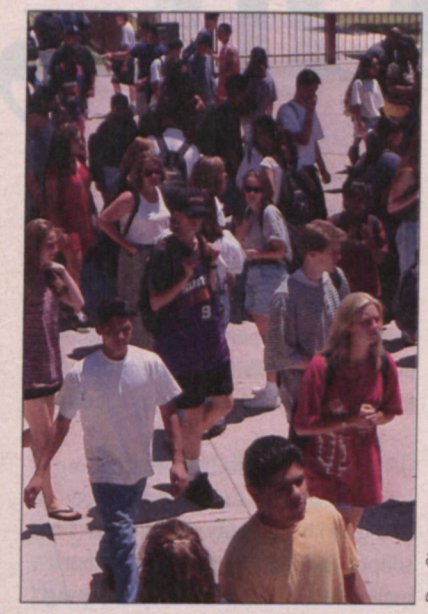


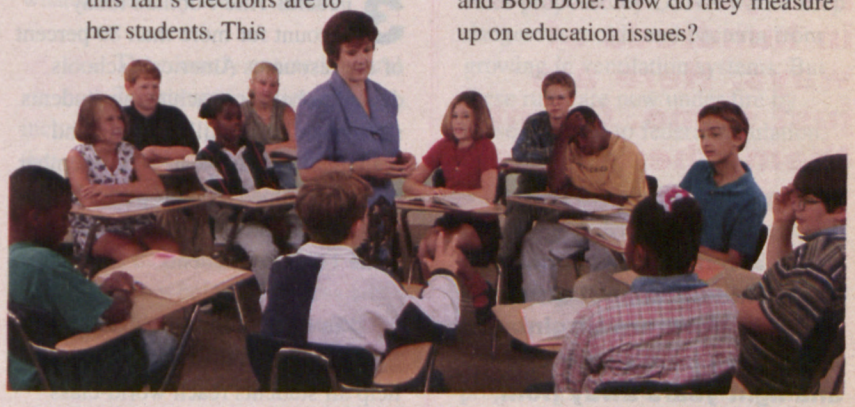
Don Stevenson

More Kids!

The "baby boom echo" resounds this fall as a record 51.7 million students enroll in the nation's schools. Numbers are up in 33 states, down in 17. Predicting 10 more years of rising enrollments, Education Secretary Richard Riley says the number of K-12 students will reach 54.6 million by the year 2006. For state-by-state details, go to http://www.ed.gov/NCES/pubs.

Cover Story

4 Your Vote, Their Future
Virginia middle school teacher and NEA member Barbara Rohr knows how important this fall's elections are to her students. This month's cover story takes a look at the dozens of ways decisions made in Washington, D.C. affect her classroom—and yours. Plus, on page 6, a comparison between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole: How do they measure up on education issues?



Newsmakers

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Bob Dole's attacks on teacher unions dismay members. NEA rebuts charge that it's an obstacle to school reform.

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An arbitration victory gives a Connecticut teacher a precious gift—more time with her newborn baby.

9 At the Bargaining Table
Kentucky teachers build the strength to bargain a contract—without the benefit of a statewide bargaining law.

10 Around the World
Seven NEA members travel to wartorn Bosnia to give teachers there a grounding in democracy—and civic education.

11 At the Local Level
Oakland, California teachers make the community connections that make better schools possible.

Learning

14 Innovators
Florida educator Israel Tribble, Jr. boosts Black student achievement with academic help, encouragement, and inspiration from Black history and culture.

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A quick look at national certification for teachers—including the who, what, when, where, and why of it all.

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Virginia members rally their community behind early learning.

25 Rights Watch
Are single-sex classes legal? Federal law bars them, but the legal picture is still a little bit fuzzy.

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State legislators could learn from an Idaho teacher whose students do research on the Internet *before* they engage in political debate.

Life

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Young educators, like this Indiana rookie, find that disciplined financial planning pays off. Advice and resources for the young—and not so young.

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Reader reactions to the new *NEA Today*. Plus a letter from two Rhode Island teachers who plumb their town for riches.

Your Vote,

Decisions made in Washington affect your classroom and your students in hundreds of ways. Here are just some. Count them, then make your vote count.

Barbara Rohr teaches middle school students in Northern Virginia, an hour or so from Richmond—and light years away from the hurly-burly of politics in Washington, D.C.

Does politics matter to the kids pictured here—or the kids in your school? You bet it does. The decisions made in Congress and the White House affect nearly every aspect of your students' lives.

"The future of federal support for public education is at stake in this election," Rohr says. "That's why I'm doing everything I can to get people to pay attention and to vote with their students' futures in mind. After all, it's our vote, but it's their future."

Whether you're thinking about your own vote or talking to your neighbors, keep in mind these examples of how decisions made in Washington impact your school and students.

1 Over 700,000 school-age children don't have homes to call their own. But many of these children are attending school, thanks to the McKinney Act, which provides federal dollars for transportation to school and other services homeless kids need. Congress this past year enacted cutbacks of 20 percent that will reduce services for as many as 500,000 kids.

2 Educators are required to report any signs of suspected child abuse. But if the "Parental Rights & Responsibilities Act" now pending in Congress passes, a reported parent who abuses a child would be able to sue the school. The grounds? Under the Parental Rights Act, a teacher who reports a bruised child to authorities could be cited for interfering with "reasonable" parental discipline.

3 Federal Title I dollars today account for more than 80 percent of the resources America's schools devote to help low-achieving students strengthen basic skills in math and reading. This past year, NEA member lobbying helped stop proposed budget cuts that would have slashed help to some 1 million students.

4 To help local schools develop and write the curricula that will help all students reach world-class standards, the 103rd Congress passed the Goals 2000: The Educate America Act. Ninety percent of the Goals 2000 Act funds were targeted to school districts in the program's first full year, but it is facing pressure from members of the 104th Congress who want to eliminate it.

5 Nearly every school has students helped by Head Start, the federal program that helps disadvantaged children start school "ready to learn." Despite budget increases over the last three years, Head Start still reaches only 35 percent of the three-, four-, and five-year-olds eligible for it.

6 Thanks to the federal school lunch program, 91,000 schools in America offer free school lunches to disadvantaged kids. Currently, 13 million children—more than one child in four—regularly miss meals at home, live in homes that run out of food before the end of the month, or show signs of serious hunger.

7 The federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, strengthened in 1994, is funding innovative local programs that help students avoid drugs. NEA last year helped stop cuts that would have eliminated aid to programs serving 23 million students.

8 Does TV rot kids' minds? The federal government is the only level of government able to pressure TV networks to increase the quantity and quality of educational programming. After pressure from the Federal Communications Commission and a White House summit, the broadcast industry recently agreed to air three hours a week of meaningful programs for children.

9 Scientists tell us that poor nutrition can irrevocably undermine the learning capacities of children. The federal WIC—Women, Infants, and Children—program annually helps about 60 percent of the nation's poor families with young children provide balanced, nutritious meals.

10 The possibility of attending college is a powerful incentive that keeps many students in school and studying hard. But that incentive is undermined by creeping cuts in the federal student aid programs. These programs account for 75 percent of all postsecondary student aid—or, to put the numbers more starkly, three times the total scholarship assistance from all other sources.

Their Future

11 What's a parent to do when a child—or an elderly dependent—becomes seriously sick? The 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act allows employees three months off, without losing health insurance coverage, to nurse their dependents to health.

12 Today's working parents seldom have time to spend at their children's school. That would change if Congress adopted a White House proposal that would mandate employers give employees up to 24 hours off annually to help with their children's school activities.

13 Nationwide, the average classroom has at least one student who lacks the English-speaking skills necessary to succeed in school. After years of federal bilingual program cutbacks, only 30 percent of the nation's 2 million limited English-speaking students are receiving help in learning basic English skills and assimilating more rapidly into all-English education courses.

14 Teachers may be forced to act as immigration officers if legislation now pending before Congress—intended to deny education to some children based on immigration status—passes.

15 Some students have trouble reading what's written on the blackboard—because they don't have the eyeglasses they need. The federally supported Medicaid program funds vision tests for families that otherwise wouldn't be able to afford them. Congress is still debating mammoth cuts in federal Medicaid aid to states.

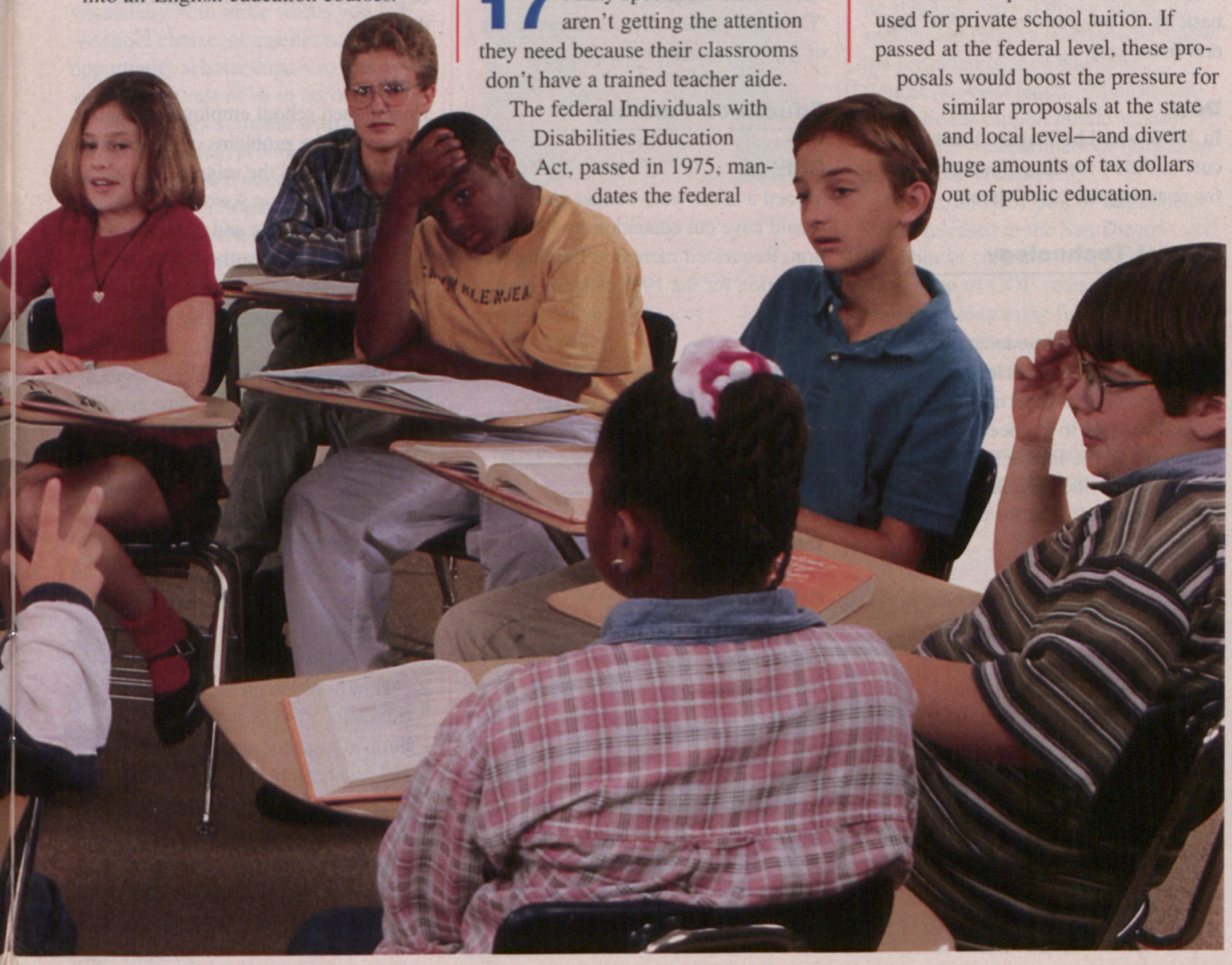
16 Not too long ago, schools used certain cleaning supplies that were more suited for chemical warfare than the classroom. Federal "right-to-know" legislation set product standards that let school employees know if they're using products that might be toxic to kids—standards now threatened by politicians hostile to those safeguards.

17 Many special needs students aren't getting the attention they need because their classrooms don't have a trained teacher aide. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, passed in 1975, mandates the federal government pick up 40 percent of the projected cost of educating special education students. But Congress today appropriates only 7 percent of what's needed by school districts.

18 The recently enacted federal Telecommunications Act includes an NEA-promoted provision that guarantees schools discounted rates for reaching the Internet. But most schools still lack the wiring and equipment that Internet-access demands. Now before Congress are proposals that would help districts afford cyberspace for their students.

19 Guns and classrooms don't mix—ever. That's one reason the Violent Crime Control Act, passed in 1994, makes it illegal for kids to carry handguns. Some members of Congress want to repeal the Violent Crime Control Act.

20 Think the school budget squeeze is tight now? Congress is considering proposals that would let public tax dollars be used for private school tuition. If passed at the federal level, these proposals would boost the pressure for similar proposals at the state and local level—and divert huge amounts of tax dollars out of public education.



21 School ventilation ducts shouldn't be breeding grounds for "Wild Kingdom" episodes. Federal indoor air quality rules proposed by OSHA would keep dangerous molds and bacteria from growing in ventilation systems. But these rules are now under fire by those opposed to federal regulation.

22 Fifty percent of American students don't go on to college. The 1994 federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act is already helping students in 27 states make the transition to the world of work. The program gives local districts grants that help set up two-year apprenticeships with local businesses. In 1996, NEA helped beat back a congressional effort to repeal the program.

23 Local programs supported by the Vocational Education Act reached approximately 10 million students last year, but federal support for voc ed dropped 29 percent in the decade of the 1980s. If additional cuts of 18 percent debated in Congress take effect, voc ed programs will have to reduce services to millions of kids.

24 Adult education programs help adults—and their children. But adult education programs today only serve 27 percent of the adults who haven't completed eighth grade. One reason: The federal government only provides $250 million of the $2.6 billion necessary to bring all adults up to educational speed.

25 The federal Eisenhower Professional Development Act has provided valuable training for nearly one-third of the nation's math and science teachers. This past year, the House of Representatives voted cutbacks that would have sliced this resource by 80 percent.

Ready to compare the candidates who want your vote on the issues that affect the future of your school, your students, and your career? Just turn the page for facts and resources that can help you evaluate how the candidates measure up.

Measuring the Candidates on the Issues

Clinton

Dole

The decisions the next President and Congress make—on everything from school lunches to college loans—will directly impact every classroom in every school. That's why NEA has been tracking where candidates for the White House and Congress stand on the issues that affect children and education.

In July, 91 percent of the over 9,000 delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly voted, by secret ballot, to recommend the candidacy of President Bill Clinton to NEA members. But the final decision on who to support this November rests, of course, with each individual NEA member. The comparsion below can help you determine, for yourself, how the two major candidates measure up.

Protecting Children's Health and Safety

School Lunches

Clinton
Vetoed legislation that would have undermined the federal commitment that all eligible children receive nutritious meals.

Dole
Despite his long-time support for the school lunch program, backed the 1995 bill weakening the school lunch program—legislation that President Clinton subsequently vetoed.

Safe Schools

Clinton
Proposed an increase in Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding in FY 1997.

Dole
In 1996, voted both against restoring funding for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program (January) and for restoring funding (March).

Children's Health

Clinton
Vetoed Medicaid cuts that would have cut off health coverage to millions of children. But signed the Welfare Reform Act passed by Congress this past summer, which will eliminate cash assistance for 300,000 children with serious disabilities.

Dole
Supported major cuts in Medicaid, which provides health coverage to millions of children. Backed the Welfare Reform Act passed by Congress, which will eliminate cash assistance for 300,000 children with serious disabilities.

Preparing Students for Jobs of the Future

College Opportunities

Clinton
Proposes to expand Pell Grant scholarships and provide a $1,000 merit scholarship to top 5 percent of every high school's graduating class. Also proposes to make up to $10,000 a year of college tuition tax deductible and to offer a tax credit of up to $1,500 per year for each of the first two years of college.

Dole
Voted in 1995 for legislation that would have made a $10 billion cut in college assistance.

Basic Skills

Clinton
Proposed an increase in the Title I basic skills program for the 1997 federal fiscal year.

Dole
In 1996, voted both against restoring cuts in Title I funding (January) and for restoring the cuts (March).

School Technology

Clinton
Promoted strong pro-education provisions in the landmark telecommunications legislation signed into law in 1996. Proposes to connect every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000 and provide adequate Internet training and software for teachers.

Dole
Voted to advance Senator John McCain's 1995 attempt to delete pro-education provisions from the Telecommunications Act. The McCain amendment would have eliminated provisions designed to provide affordable Internet access to schools and libraries.

Strengthening Public Education in America

Private School Vouchers

Clinton
Opposes the use of public tax dollars for private school tuition. Opposed the 1993 California voucher initiative, saying: "Wouldn't it be ironic if, at the very time we're finally trying to find a way to measure the performance and raise the standards of the public schools, we turn around and start sending tax money to private schools that didn't have to meet any standards at all?"

Dole
Has proposed a $2.5 billion program that would give families up to $1,500 per child for private school tuition. To fund the program, would make cuts in current federal education programs. Announced the plan in July, saying: "Over our public schools hangs an air of failure, frustration, and futility."

Education Funding

Clinton
Vetoed a seven-year budget plan that would have cut education by $30 billion. Requested increased funding for education for the 1997 federal fiscal year.

Dole
Voted for the seven-year budget plan—subsequently vetoed by President Clinton—that would have cut education by $30 billion.

Department of Education

Clinton
Has stated that eliminating this Cabinet-level department "would be like undercutting the Department of Defense during the Cold War."

Dole
Advocates the elimination of the department: "The best thing we can do is turn out the lights, lock the doors, and send the workers home."

Respecting the Rights of School Employees

Employee Rights

Clinton
Has supported legislation to expand workplace safety protection to cover all public employees, including school employees. Has opposed efforts to weaken federal workplace safety and health standards.

Dole
Was the main sponsor in the Senate of legislation that would have weakened federal workplace health and safety standards.

School Employees

Clinton
Backs a strong role for educators in strengthening public education: "We ought to lift them up, not tear them down."

Dole
Has blamed school employee organizations for the problems of education: "It's time to end the reign of the National Education Association and re-associate parents and communities with decisions about their children."

More on the Candidates' Stands

This year, for the first time ever, voters can access deeply detailed information about where candidates for the White House and Congress stand, thanks to cyberspace. Both the Clinton and Dole campaigns—as well as the campaigns of a number of congressional candidates—have created sites on the Internet's World Wide Web.

Now available on NEA's Web site (http://www.nea.org/info/lrc/index.html) is a special section that allows any American to see how incumbent members of Congress have voted on legislation that directly affects children and education.

For a list of other election Web sites, see page 34.

In the Nation

Campaign '96 Spotlights NEA

Dole blasts against 'teachers unions' amaze, anger many NEA members.

It's not every day that a candidate for President of the United States makes the organizations that represent America's teachers a major campaign issue. In fact, that's never happened—until this year.

"Teachers unions" have emerged as the unexpected issue in this year's Presidential campaign.

The first salvo was fired at the Republican Convention in San Diego. In his acceptance speech, candidate Bob Dole charged that the teacher unions support President Clinton because they "know he will maintain the status quo."

"To the teachers unions I say, when I am President, I will disregard your political power, for the sake of the children, the schools, and the nation," said Dole. "I plan to enrich your vocabulary with those words you fear —school choice, competition, and opportunity scholarships—so that you will join the rest of us in accountability, while others compete with you for the commendable privilege of giving our children a real education."

At the end of August, the Dole campaign turned up the rhetorical burners. The occasion: President Clinton's announcement of a $2.75 billion program to mobilize a national corps of literacy tutors.

Candidate Dole promptly blasted the Clinton program as "a new pot of money for the unions."

"He's found a demon," the lead *USA Today* editorial the next day noted. "Denouncing teachers unions has been the thrust of Dole's education message since his nomination. And that is unfortunate."

Many NEA members around the country share that same reaction.

"Bob Dole said he was not condemning teachers, only teacher unions," says North Carolina NEA member Karen Garr. "He obviously doesn't know how NEA works. I am the NEA. My colleagues at Apex Elementary School are NEA. When Dole attacks NEA, he attacks me and the 2.2 million other teachers who get up every morning and go to school to teach children."

"Teacher unions have been at the forefront of education reform, but because we're against vouchers for private schools, we're criticized for favoring the status quo."
—Fred Knudsen, social studies teacher, Owatonna, Minnesota

"In all fairness to Bob Dole, he has to attack us. We are the only truly organized group that stands against the Gingrich troops and their war on children. They know we will not give over our children easily, so they have to try to discredit us."
—Meline Kasparian, English teacher, Springfield, Massachusetts

"As an active member of one of those 'dreaded' teachers unions, I can state from experience that the NEA is leading the way when it comes to improvement and reform," adds Janis Tsugawa, a middle school teacher in Glendale Heights, Illinois. "My participation with my Association is as important to my profession as anything I do in my classroom."

Some NEA members are bristling at the Dole campaign's effort to demonize NEA.

"The NEA has never dictated that I do anything—except that I should strive to be the very best teacher I can be," says Shelley Zevnik, a civics teacher in Tulsa. "Why slam the very people who have dedicated themselves to truly make a difference in the future of our country?"

Some NEA members are convinced that, deep down, Bob Dole doesn't really believe his campaign charges against NEA.

"Bob Dole is playing to the far right conservatives who do not support public schools," says Barbara Smith, a speech and English teacher who's now the president of the Oklahoma Education Association. "Mainstream Republicans support public schools and the U.S. Department of Education and oppose vouchers."

In fact, an NEA poll of Republican voters released at the San Diego Republican convention showed that 79 percent of GOP voters favor maintaining or increasing funding for federal education programs.

"America's schools are a reflection of our society," sums up LaVeta Weatherington, an art teacher in Greenville, North Carolina. "We're not a part of the problem. We're part of the solution!"

Dole Education Adviser Singing a Different Tune

Ever since Bob Dole's first blast against "teachers unions," NEA President Bob Chase has been answering a constant flow of questions from national media ranging from "ABC Nightline" to *Time*.

"Anyone who says we're an obstacle to improving education just doesn't understand what this organization has been doing," says Chase. "NEA has spent more than $70 million over the last 11 years in programs to help students learn."

Ironically, a key Dole campaign adviser on education, former Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, praised NEA's work on behalf of school change five years ago at a national NEA meeting.

"I would like to see you continue the efforts you're making to be out front in the efforts to transform education in America," Alexander told the NEA Board of Directors in 1991.

Heroes & Zeroes

Maybe high school student Tatewin Means has 25 hours in her day. That would help explain how the Rapid City, South Dakota straight-A student-athelete has found the time to serve on the city Youth Advisory Council, win national dance competitions, be crowned Miss South Dakota Teen, tutor in math, and volunteer at hospitals. Or maybe it's 26?

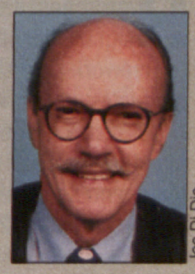
Joe Di Dio

Empty excuses. That's what winners of a District of Columbia student poster contest received instead of the announced cash prizes. Halfway through the contest, city officials decided it was just too much work. So they cut off funding—but didn't tell the students. It took 18 months for the city to be shamed into keeping its promise.

You may be looking forward to commercials soon. In a new 10-year campaign, the Advertising Council will devote the majority of its public service ads to children's issues. Extra kudos to AT&T, whose $3 million grant got the ball rolling.

It looks like Herb Lanese, president of McDonnell Douglas, won't be getting the Nobel Peace Prize this year. He recently told his workers how they should feel about the employees of rival companies: "I wish they were dead," he said. "I wish their children would starve to death. When you all get that mindset, then we'll be in synch."

Half a million dimes. That's how much Michigan NEA member Don Nichols hopes to raise for the March of Dimes by jogging and biking across America for the next two years. He sees it as giving something back. The year 1998 will be the 50th year since the March of Dimes paid for Nichols's own childhood surgeries.



Joe Di Dio

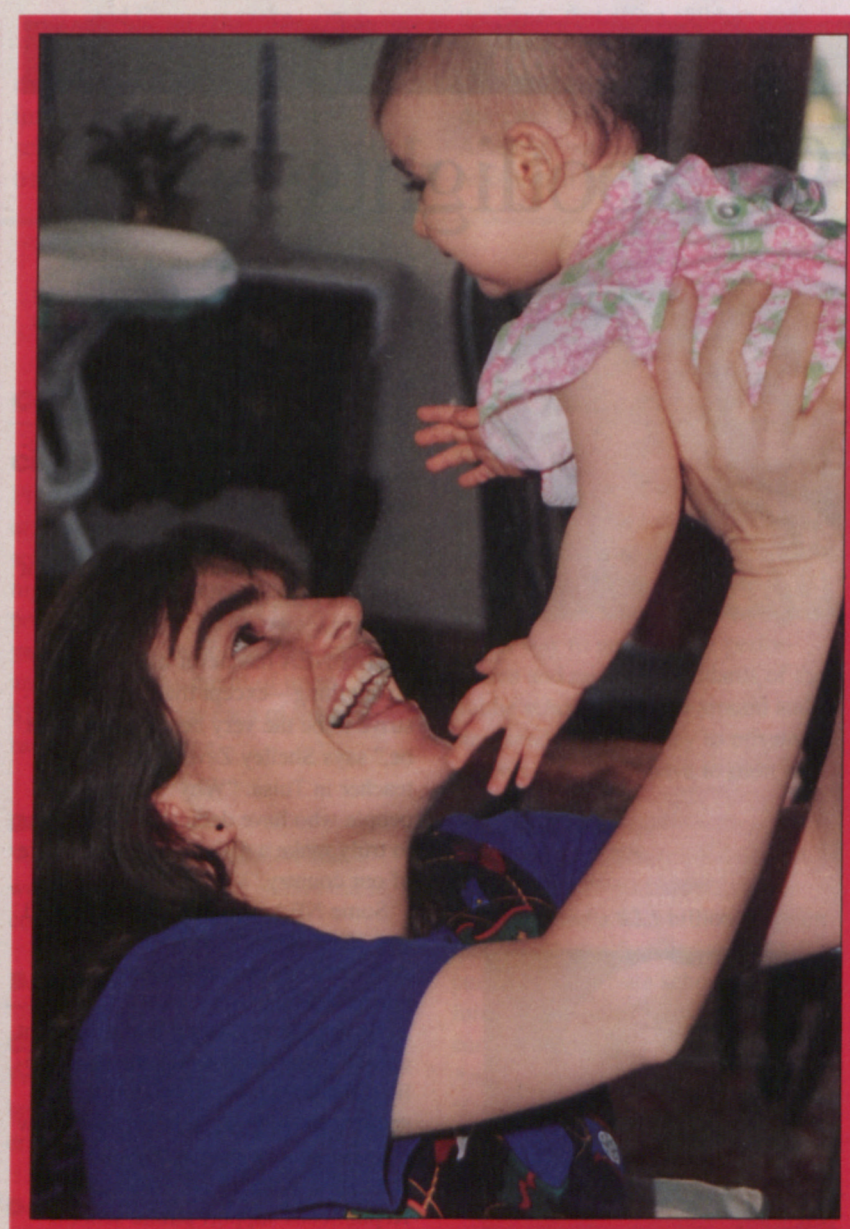
On Your Side

Just for the Fun of It?
In 1994, the Morris (New Jersey) School District Board of Education stopped paying a $1,200 annual stipend to 47 members of the Education Association of Morris serving on the district's site-based management teams. Team members still served and eventually brought their case to arbitration. The ruling: If the board continues the program, it's got to pay. Team members were awarded $54,000 in stipends.

A Double Whammy
The Ewing (Nebraska) Board of Education changed teachers' insurance plans and took money from the paychecks of employees who refused to switch coverage. A county court stopped the board, ordering it to pay $6,500 to 21 Association members. And the state required it to post a notice stating the district "will not unilaterally modify" contractual terms.

Last Laugh
With help from the Indiana State Teachers Association, special ed teacher Willarose Parsons won her job back—with back pay. Three years ago, she was fired amid questionable review practices and criticized by administrators for "laughing too loudly." "No college can prepare you for some of the things administrators do," she says.

Nurses Validated
Delaware public nurses' contract with the state Department of Health says requests for "compressed" schedules—with different hours on four of five work days—"shall not be unreasonably denied." But they were—more than once. The nurses, represented by the Delaware State Education Association, took the issue to arbitration, winning a ruling that the state cannot deny this type of request without providing a *valid* reason.



Mike Lydick

Teacher Karen Paruolo enjoys time with daughter Emily.

No Cash on Delivery?

An NEA member fights for paid maternity leave.

Despite the election year talk about defending "family values," many NEA members see a wide gap between rhetoric and reality. But, in state after state, NEA affiliates are working to narrow this gap for employees like Karen Paruolo.

As an expectant mother, Paruolo had been granted the right to use up accumulated sick pay while on maternity leave in fall 1995. This was a long-standing practice of her employer, the Region 19 school board in Connecticut.

Paruolo, a social studies teacher at E.O. Smith High School in Mansfield, was looking forward to spending time at home with her newborn daughter.

But one scant month before her due date, Paruolo's serenity was shattered. The board told her she'd get no pay while on leave, saying it was adhering to contract language that specifies child-rearing leave as "non-paid."

"My baby was due in July," says Paruolo. "I was notified in June. Being told pretty close to the last minute put my leave plans in jeopardy."

After the board refused to reconsider its decision, Paruolo—a member of the Region 19 Education Association—did the smart thing. She filed a grievance.

At the arbitration hearing, Connecticut Education Association UniServ Rep Maggie Mahland argued that the board's revocation was unjust, unexpected, and untimely.

The arbitrator agreed. She awarded Paruolo 14 weeks' back pay and health insurance reimbursement.

"CEA did everything possible to reassure me that it would all work out okay," says Paruolo. "And, fortunately, it did."

Defending Free Speech
A federal district court has ruled that a Wyoming school district violated the free speech rights of special ed teacher Pamela Westbrook—by trying to enforce a "conduct policy" that bars employees from criticizing school officials.

Westbrook had been reprimanded for sending a letter to a local newspaper blasting administrator handling of student discipline. The judge has enjoined the Teton County District #1 from enforcing its conduct policy, calling the policy a "draconian measure squarely at odds with the First Amendment."

The Wyoming Education Association agrees. That's why it provided full legal support to Westbrook throughout her court battle. NEA funded 50 percent of the case costs.

The Bottom Line

High school students are taking significantly more demanding coursework. The share of high school graduates who have completed the "new basics"—four years of English, plus three each of social studies, math, and science—has soared from 14 percent in 1982 to 51 percent in 1994.

Workplace accidents last year killed 6,500 Americans. On-the-job deaths have dropped 50 percent since the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration 25 years ago. But budget cutbacks have undermined OSHA's safety monitoring, and legislation pending in Congress would effectively gut safety standards.

Eighty-three percent of secondary school girls—and 60 percent of boys—have received unwanted sexual attention from classmates, according to a comprehensive University of Michigan survey. Perhaps the most surprising find: 72 percent of the students who say they've been harassed admit to harassing others.

Over half the teachers in inner-city schools consider absenteeism a serious problem in their schools. Almost half say tardiness is undermining student achievement. Overall, 8 percent of public school students are absent on any given day. In urban high schools, the absentee rate is running 50 percent higher.

At the Bargaining Table

Where There's a Will . . .

Kentucky members bargain a solid first contract—without the benefit of a bargaining law.

In rural Martin County, Kentucky, 170 educators ratified a comprehensive first-time contract early this year, with everything from an 8 percent raise to strong student discipline language in the deal. Not bad for a "non-bargaining" state.

Kentucky is one of the 16 states that do not legally guarantee school employee bargaining rights. However—with a push—a Kentucky school board can voluntarily recognize a union and bargain collectively.

That's what happened in the mountains of Martin County. Back in 1994, the school board offered a modest raise, telling Martin County Education Association leaders they lacked funds to do more. But then the board "found" more money for important bus driver needs, like trip stipends.

MCEA members were "upset they were lied to," recalls UniServ Director Marlene Becker. "They organized, got the community behind them, and got the superintendent in the hot seat."

Responding to the pressure—which included Association strike preparations—the board granted formal bargaining recognition to MCEA in January 1995.

Then the Association and school board did something smart.

Instead of digging in for trench warfare, they agreed to try "mutual gains" bargaining, in which labor/management subcommittees set aside personalities and jointly developed language to address specific issues.

"We were really *negotiating*, instead of sitting across from one another as adversaries," points out MCEA President Gloria Blackburn, a teacher at Warfield Middle School.

Mike James

"If the opportunity arises and bargaining seems possible, go for it," says MCEA President Gloria Blackburn (right).

The result is an agreement in which "neither party felt imposed upon by the other," says Arden Shumaker of NEA's Office of Collective Bargaining and Compensation.

MCEA and the board signed a two-year master contract that guarantees teachers an 8 percent salary increase this school year. The pact also includes a grievance procedure without filing time limits, district-wide transfer rights based on seniority, expanded leave opportunities, teachers' right to bar expelled students from class, and two paid non-teaching days to be used at teachers' discretion.

"Having a written contract makes all the difference," stresses MCEA bargaining chair Mick McCoy, who teaches at Sheldon Clark High School. "This agreement has eliminated much of the local politics that can toy with teachers' lives."

Working in a Lawless Environment

It's easier to negotiate contracts under a collective bargaining law that spells out a code of conduct, a union recognition procedure, and a process for resolving stalemates.

But not having such a law hasn't stopped nine NEA state affiliates from bargaining anyway. In fact, the majority of teachers in Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Wyoming—all "non-bargaining law" states—work under a written union contract.

Building Trust
The Seattle Education Association and the school district have extended their contract for a year and "wrapped" it with a Trust Agreement that commits the parties to a partnership. The pact calls for involving staff in "decisions that affect instruction and delivery of educational programs" and lists 40 "mutual interests." These include retaining quality substitutes and increasing parent and community participation.

Final Results
In Wisconsin, Madison Teachers Incorporated has cracked a state law that effectively stops the arbitration of economic disputes. Threatening job actions, MTI forced the district to send its pay and benefits proposal to arbitration—resulting in an award that grants teachers $4.9 million more than the district's "final" two-year offer.

Strikers Reverse Pay Cut
They struck in June, picketed the state superintendent's office, and visited the governor and legislators. Now members of the Compton (California) Education Association have ratified a new two-year contract that restores a 3 percent pay cut and adds a 1 percent increase. The pact also reinstates a broad-based committee to recommend school repairs and safety improvements.

Thanks, But No Thanks
Backed by support staffers, teacher members of the North Country (Vermont) Union High School Education Association dumped a board-imposed contract last spring and reached a new three-year contract. The pact paid out $500 per teacher last year, includes 2 percent in new money this year and next, and restores leave and job protection language.

Ohio will probably become the second state to use public tax dollars for private school tuition. A Cleveland program will give 1,500 K-3 students up to $2,250 for private and religious schools. Funding comes from cutting $5.25 million from an existing public education aid program.

More than a half million adults earned high school equivalency diplomas last year, the highest annual figure in the GED's 53-year history. Nearly three-quarters of the 724,000 adults who took the GED last year passed. The bad news? More than 40 million adults still lack a high school diploma.

American IQ scores are higher than ever—but Americans aren't necessarily smarter, say some psychologists. The 15-point hike over 50 years reflects the influence of new media ranging from TV to arcade games. These media help youngsters manipulate 3-D images, an ability rewarded by nonverbal IQ test scores.

New regulations from the federal Food and Drug Administration ban the marketing of cigarettes to young people, outlawing brand-name tobacco advertising at sports events or within 1,000 feet of schools or playgrounds. Five tobacco companies are asking the courts to derail the new FDA regulations.

Around the World

UNICEF Reaches 50

The United Nations Children's Fund—founded with the goal of making the world a better place for children—is marking its 50th anniversary. A year-long celebration culminates with National UNICEF Month in October. The U.S. Committee for UNICEF has prepared a special package of materials for use in schools. The materials, appropriate for grades 1-9, are free and guide adults in helping children plan fun and educational activities around this year's theme, "Increase the Peace." Call 800/252-KIDS.

Teachers Worldwide

October 5 marks this year's celebration of World Teachers' Day. This annual observance to honor the teaching profession and enhance public awareness of the value of teachers was launched in 1994 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Education International, the international organization of national education employee unions. EI has a membership of 272 organizations in 146 countries with more than 23 million education workers. NEA is a charter member of EI—and its largest affiliate.

EI on the Internet

The Education International now has a Web home page. This still-developing resource, created with NEA's help, can be found at http://www.education.unesco.org/partners/ei/welcome.htm.

Northern Exposure

American educators aren't the only ones concerned about issues like vouchers, charter schools, inclusion, and parental involvement. Your colleagues in the British Columbia (Canada) Teachers Federation are, too. Visit their Web site at http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctf/.

Working in a War Zone

AP/Wide World

Schoolchildren hike to classes in Tuzla, one of seven Bosnian cities where NEA members conducted civics courses for teachers, helping to rebuild the country after a war that killed 250,000.

American educators lay foundation for democracy with Bosnian teachers.

Sarajevo. Tuzla. Bihac. In these war-ravaged Bosnian cities, seven NEA members recently helped establish the groundwork for democracy, conducting training sessions for Bosnian teachers on civic education.

The two-week courses ran a nonstop six hours a day this past summer. A total of 14 educators covered the philosophical foundations of democracy, modern policy evaluation, policy formation skills, and more.

"This program has given some of the Bosnian teachers the courage to go to their officials and make their voices heard," says Susan Roe, an American history teacher at C.E. Jordan High School in Durham, North Carolina.

Joan Beaver

"These are the same people who, while under Communist rule, saw those who dared to speak out simply disappear," Roe adds. "I think this program is empowering for them."

Alongside high praise for the program, sponsored by the United States Information Agency and the Center for Civic Education, many team members also acknowledge the tense times during their stay.

"It—the destruction—began as soon as we crossed the Croatian border," says Sharon Moran, who teaches political science at South Windsor High School in Connecticut.

"From Mostar to Sarajevo, all I saw were miles of new graves lining the road," she reports. "Whole villages were destroyed. I couldn't believe it."

Besides the stress of being surrounded by the remnants of a recent war, the American teachers also faced less visible obstacles.

"Our first day with the Bosnian teachers wasn't easy," recalls Joan Beaver, an American history teacher at Minnesota's Stillwater Area High School. "We were worried about saying the wrong thing. They were wary of us, not knowing what we are all about. We were all pretty apprehensive."

But both sides opened up.

"Teachers are teachers," says Beaver. "And no matter where you are, they share one common concern: the well-being of their students."

It's this same concern, says Roe, that drove Bosnian teachers to keep their schools operating for their own students during the course of the war.

"They cut their school year in half," she notes, "but they continued to have classes. Essentially, they crammed more material into less time and worked around the bombs. In those places where the shelling knocked out the electricity, they worked by candlelight."

For Roe, that sort of dedication to education fills her with hope for the future of Bosnia.

"I think education has helped preserve our democracy," she concludes. "And I think it's going to start Bosnia's."

—Alejandro Cabrera

The Bottom Line

One American Olympic team didn't get nearly the attention it deserved this past summer. Competing in Bombay, India, at the 37th International Mathematical Olympiad, the six high school students on the U.S. team finished second in a field of 75 nations, only two points out of first.

English and German are tough languages, since words aren't always spelled as they sound. This fall, German schools will start teaching new spelling rules designed to end the gap between the spoken and written language. Old spellings will still be considered "correct" until the year 2005.

Talk about overly defensive. Earlier this year, the House and Senate defense panels gave the Pentagon $13 billion more than it asked for—about the amount Congress voted to cut from student loan and apprenticeship programs over the next six years.

For the first time since 1928, more than 40 percent of America's high school students are studying foreign languages. Spanish has become the most popular language course, claiming about two-thirds of language course enrollment. Some 26 percent are studying French, the most popular language a quarter-century ago.

At the Local Level

Gary Parker

Parents like Wafer Theus (right) work with educators like Trish Gorham in post-strike efforts to improve Oakland, California schools inside and out.

Cultivating Common Ground

Teachers work with parents—even on the picket line—to improve education in Oakland.

When the 3,500-member Oakland (California) Education Association went on strike earlier this year, it galvanized parental support, won the backing of the local media, and brought teachers and community together to fight for better public schools.

OEA was spared the community backlash that often adds strife to strikes because of its long-standing commitment to parental involvement.

"They always say that a strike is not the way to involve parents," says Trish Gorham, a prep teacher at Washington Elementary School and former OEA board member. "But if you lay a foundation and do your homework, it is very possible."

For years, OEA has worked at establishing close ties to the community through efforts such as the NEA-backed Urban Initiative Project, which trained parents, teachers, administrators, and students to work as a team.

So as the strike loomed in fall 1995, OEA members were well positioned to invite educators, parents, and local media to almost 100 house meetings to discuss the teachers' demands.

And when the strike finally happened, it wasn't just a teachers' strike. It was an entire community saying that it was fed up with the way its public schools were run.

"I feel it was a real opportunity for Oakland to stand up and tell the whole state that we need to commit resources to our urban areas," said parent Laurel Dost during the strike.

The community knew that the teachers were on its side. "We emphasized the three Rs," says Gorham. "Raise teachers' salaries, reduce class size, and reallocate administrative resources."

Class sizes were out of control, some with as many as 60 students. District administration was top-heavy. Teachers had gone five years without a raise and had the lowest teacher salaries in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Striking teachers and parents organized alternative schools in churches, libraries, and homes. Few parents sent their children to the replacement teachers at public schools.

After five weeks of the strike, the district agreed to most of OEA's demands. Points included completing all principal, teacher, and student classroom assignments before the first day of school, reducing class sizes, and holding "Back to School" days for parents prior to the start of school.

Now that the school district has made its promises, OEA is working with parent and religious organizations to make sure that they're kept.

"The community has to own these schools," concludes OEA Executive Director Ward Rountree.

—Dax Oliver

Tenure Change

Under a new South Dakota law that goes into effect January 1, the standard of non-renewal of tenured teachers will be just cause—and these employees will be afforded due process. Lobbying by South Dakota Education Association members made it all possible.

A Perfect Score

Members of the Cobb County (Georgia) Association of Educators recently won Association dues payroll deduction by a 7-0 school board vote—despite strong administration efforts to thwart it. Said longtime Association member Elizabeth Rhodes after the vote: "That's why it was cold last week—hell froze over!"

Disciplined Review

In Ohio, members of the Dayton Education Association used a contract provision creating a student discipline committee of teachers and administrators to help overhaul the district's overall discipline policy. The committee conducted focus groups and met regularly with people across the community to create a new 40-page policy. The document—defining staff rights, family expectations, and clear disciplinary procedures—was soon adopted by the Dayton school board.

Come Together

In Sussex County, Delaware, Seaford custodians have voted to affiliate with the Delaware State Education Association. In Laurel, school secretaries have done likewise, unifying with DSEA-represented custodians and paraprofessionals in the newly created Laurel Education Support Employees Association. Each new member makes the Association stronger.

Despite opposition from NEA, the Children's Defense Fund, and a host of other family advocacy groups, Congress has passed—and the White House has signed—a welfare reform act that will drive an estimated 1.5 million children into poverty. The legislation offers no funding for job creation.

Americans don't want their tax dollars subsidizing private education. In a recent Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 61 percent reject the idea of students and their parents choosing a private school at public expense. How about vouchers diverting public money to private tuition? 54 percent say no.

Network TV executives, after extensive negotiations with the White House, have agreed to air at least three hours of educational programming every week. The programming must air between 7 and 10:00 a.m. Stations that don't comply could lose their broadcast license.

Scores on the ACT—the college admissions test used instead of the SAT in many Midwest and Southern states—are up significantly again, part of "a positive—and virtually unprecedented—development," says ACT President Richard Ferguson. Nearly a million graduating seniors took the ACT last year.

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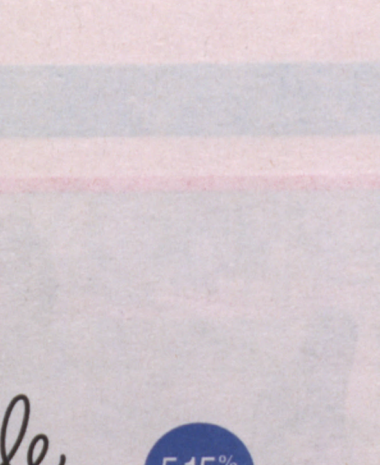

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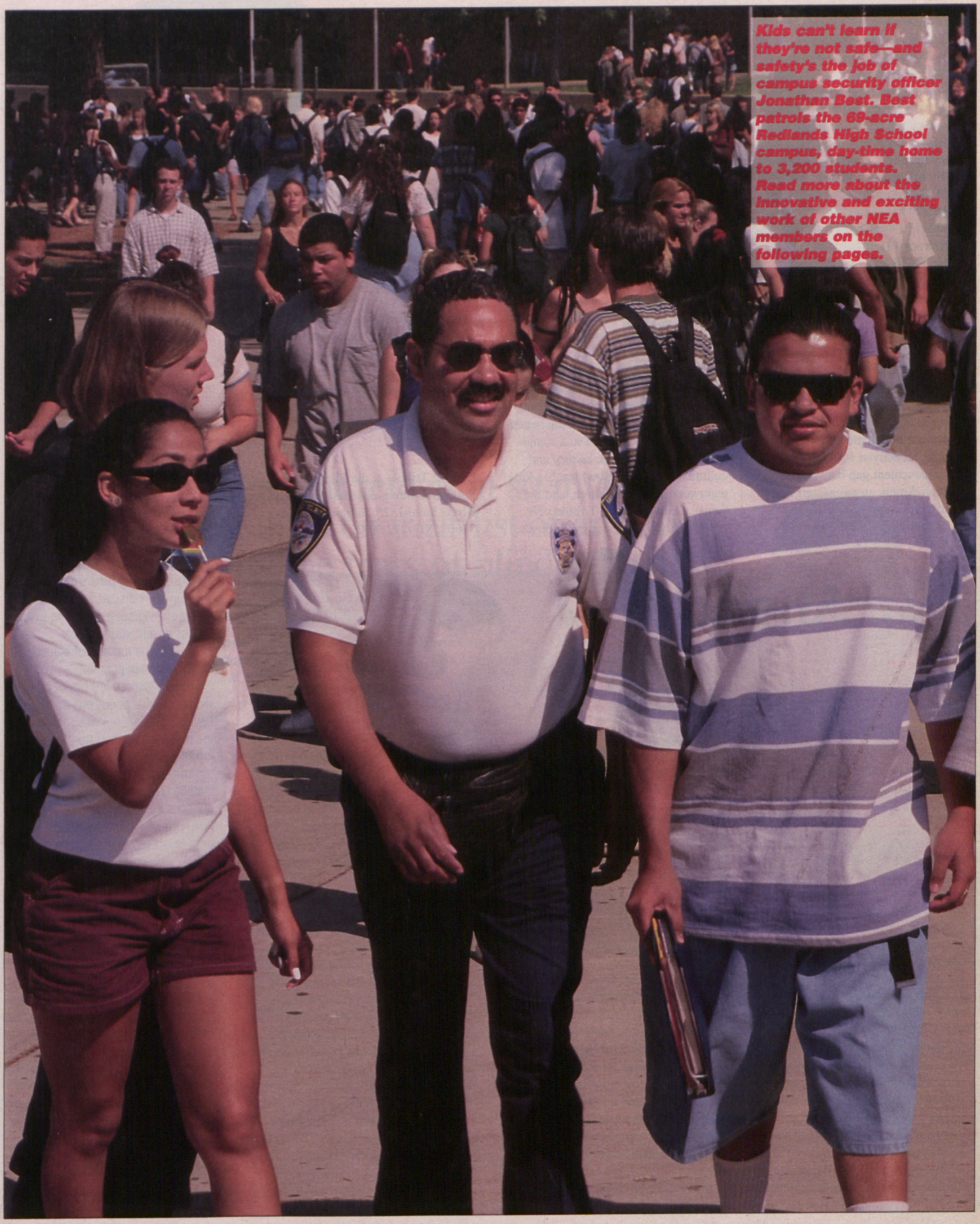


Kids can't learn if they're not safe—and safety's the job of campus security officer Jonathan Best. Best patrols the 69-acre Redlands High School campus, day-time home to 3,200 students. Read more about the innovative and exciting work of other NEA members on the following pages.

Innovators

Boosting Black Achievement

Innovator:
Israel Tribble, Jr.

Job:
Tribble presides over the Florida Education Fund. Based in Tampa, Florida, the Fund helps African-Americans obtain PhDs, with the goal of diversifying college faculties nationwide.

Eileen Connors/Silver Image

Bright Idea:
In 1983, the McKnight Foundation presented Tribble, an activist working to close the achievement gap between African-American youngsters and their white counterparts, with $5 million to "educate African-American youth."

With the money, Tribble launched the first of 11 Centers of Excellence—academic enrichment centers where K-12 students can get help with their homework, receive individual encouragement, and learn about Black history and culture—in Florida.

One Center highlight is the Brain Bowl, in which teams of middle and high school students from each center compete for scholarships in a round-robin quiz about Black history and culture. "The Brain Bowl teaches kids teamwork, how to research, and the value of competition," Tribble says.

If the Brain Bowl doesn't motivate students, the McKnight Achiever Society surely does. This honor society "takes away the stigma of doing well in school and motivates kids to get *A*s and *B*s," Tribble explains. More than 10,000 achievers now sport the society's emblem—a black satin jacket.

Tribble's long-term goal: to create Centers of Excellence all across the nation.

Impact:
"The Centers of Excellence have affected some 30,000 kids," Tribble says. "The college-bound rate among Brain Bowl winners is better than 95 percent." At last count, senior winners won 75 college scholarships.

For More:
Contact Tribble at the Florida Education Fund, 201 East Kennedy Blvd., Suite 1525, Tampa, Florida 33602, 813/272-2772.

A Step Ahead

Innovator:
Joyce Jones

Job:
Jones is a school secretary at Irving Pertzsch Elementary in Onalaska, Wisconsin, a small town on the southwestern edge of the state.

WEAC

Bright Idea:
Two years ago Jones developed an official training program for school support staff in her home district. Now ESP members can earn a certificate through the Wisconsin Education Association Council's Professional Development Academy and the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse.

"I feel strongly that the support personnel in our schools need training in their fields," says Jones. "We are called on to handle all kinds of situations—tend to sick and injured children, calm irate parents, administer medications, defuse tense situations, make judgment calls in emergency situations, and be a jack-of-all-trades.

"If we get training," she adds, "we'll be better informed and more confident in our abilities."

To earn a certificate, school employees must earn five credits in each of four core areas—communications in the workplace, behavior management strategies, human growth and development, and rights and responsibilities under state and federal law. Then, they must earn 10 credits in elective areas related to their job categories, along with five credits in other electives.

In Onalaska, the district covers the cost of the courses and provides comp time for attendance.

When they're finished, support staffers have a certificate—and possibly a ticket to recognition, higher salaries, and other job opportunities.

Impact:
The ESP certificate program is the first program of its kind in the state. More than 70 support personnel are now enrolled.

Jones expects the program to grow every year and become a model for professional development in other states. "This is just the beginning," she says. "We're looking for it to spread across the country."

For More:
Contact Joyce Jones at 608/783-5644, or Katie Stout, director of the Professional Development Academy at 800/362-8034, ext. 294.

Punished by Rewards

The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise and Other Bribes, *Alfie Kohn, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993*

"The core of pop behaviorism is 'do this and you'll get that.' We take for granted that this is the logical way to raise children, teach students, and manage employees. . . .To induce students to learn, we present stickers, stars, certificates, awards, trophies, and above all, grades.

In a Texas junior high school, 'excellent behavior' earns a 'Good as Gold' card that entitles the holder to movie passes, t-shirts, or other prizes. Any time we wish to encourage or discourage certain behaviors—getting people to lose weight or quit smoking, for instance—the method of choice is behavioral manipulation.

There is something profoundly wrong-headed about this doctrine. Its assumptions are misleading and the practices it generates are both intrinsically objectionable and counterproductive. Pop behaviorism usually fails to produce the consequences we intended.

To offer such an indictment is not to suggest that there is something wrong with most of the things that are used as rewards. It is not the bubble gum itself that is the problem, nor money, nor love and attention. . . .To take what people want or need and offer it on a contingent basis in order to control how they act—this is where the trouble lies.

Our attention is focused not on 'that' (the things desired) but on the requirement that one must do this in order to get that.

My premise is that rewarding people for their compliance is not 'the way the world works,' as many insist. It is not a fundamental law of human nature. The steep price we pay for our uncritical allegiance to the use of rewards is deeply disconcerting."

Mike Hrdlicka

Mary Pipher is a practicing clinical psychologist, mother of two, and author of the New York Times *best-seller,* Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls, *and the celebrated,* The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families. *A down-to-earth, engaging, and thought-provoking speaker, Pipher lives in Lincoln, Nebraska.*

Reviving **Families**

Q What can educators do to boost self-esteem among adolescent girls?

A Teachers need to be cheerleading for girls. They can select readings that portray women as strong. They can ensure that half the literature they teach is written by women. Health and gym teachers can help girls feel good about their bodies, and wearing school uniforms can turn down the volume on the intense competition to wear the right clothes.

Teachers must also encourage girls in math and science, and know that if girls don't understand the material, it's because the material is hard, not because they aren't up to it.

Q What should families do to help children become better achievers in school?

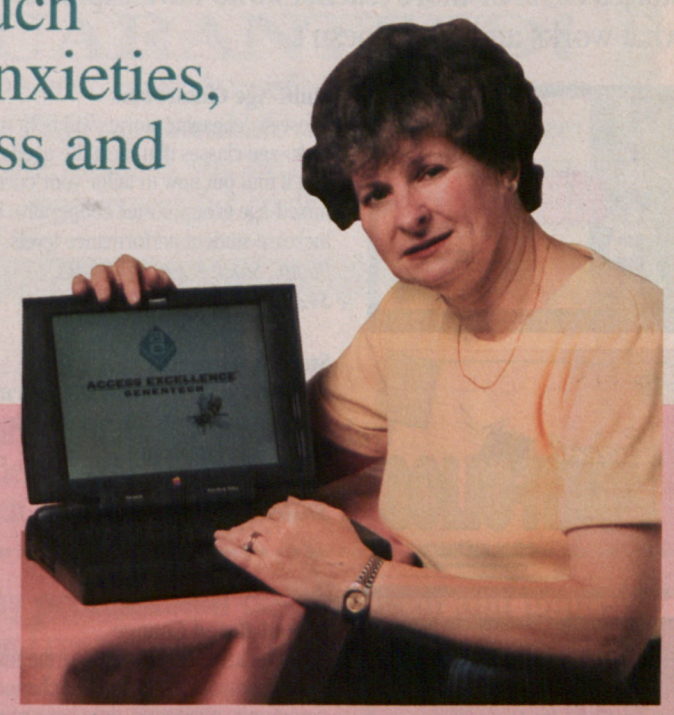
A Families can protect their children from what's ugly and harmful in our culture—and introduce them to what is good and beautiful in art, music, and nature. Parents need to control the media in their homes and be thoughtful about the number of computers and TVs they have and how many hours a day family members are using them. They need to look at what kinds of magazines their children read, meet their children's friends, and encourage adult-supervised activities. And parents should join support groups to exchange ideas and information.

Q When it comes to rebuilding families, what can educators do?

A Schools can offer parents workshops on how to be good parents, how to have strong families, and how to make decisions about media, time, money, and discipline. Schools can also help build communities so that parents and students feel connected. Weekly events at school where parents, students, the faculty, and principal eat a meal together can help achieve this.

"Children fear retention so much that they cite it third on their list of anxieties, following only the fears of blindness and death of a parent."

Linda Darling-Hammond and Beverly Falk
National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching



5 Tips for **Professional Development Training**

1 Bargain for time and pay for professional development activities.

2 Organize staff development activities as part of your monthly or annual Association meetings.

3 Keep records of your professional development activities. They come in handy during job evaluations.

4 Create a plan for your own professsional development. Identify skills you need to brush up on.

5 Tell supervisors you're interested in professional development so they can pass information on to you.

Source: Katie Stout, director, WEAC Professional Development Academy

Getting Ready for **Science**

Innovator:
Phyllis Jean Robitaille

Job:
Robitaille is a biology teacher at Dr. Phillips High School in Orlando, Florida, and an adjunct professor of biological sciences at Florida Southern College in Leesburg. This past summer, Robitaille was one of 100 biology teachers selected by the biotechnology company Genentech, Inc. to participate in Access Excellence, a communications network that gave teachers computers with online access to Genentech's bioscientists and to each other.

Bright Idea:
It was 1987 and Robitaille was frustrated. Too many students were entering high school ill-equipped for science.

"Since kids get their love of science and basic science foundation from elementary school teachers," Robitaille says, "I decided to design a course to give these teachers the confidence and knowledge to teach science."

The summer course Robitaille now teaches at Florida Southern College involves biology, chemistry, and genetics, and shows teachers how to conduct their own experiments and run labs. The elementary teachers enrolled learn how to design a discovery corner in their classrooms where students can freely conduct open-ended lab experiments.

"My goal is to teach teachers to teach kids that science is fun, that it's about questioning or 'quests,' and that they can't make a mistake because science is about hypotheses and variables," she says.

Impact:
In 10 years, approximately 400 elementary school teachers have completed Robitaille's course, and several have won state and corporate science teaching awards.

For More:
Contact Robitaille by E-mail at robitap@mail.firn.edu or at work, 407/352-4040.

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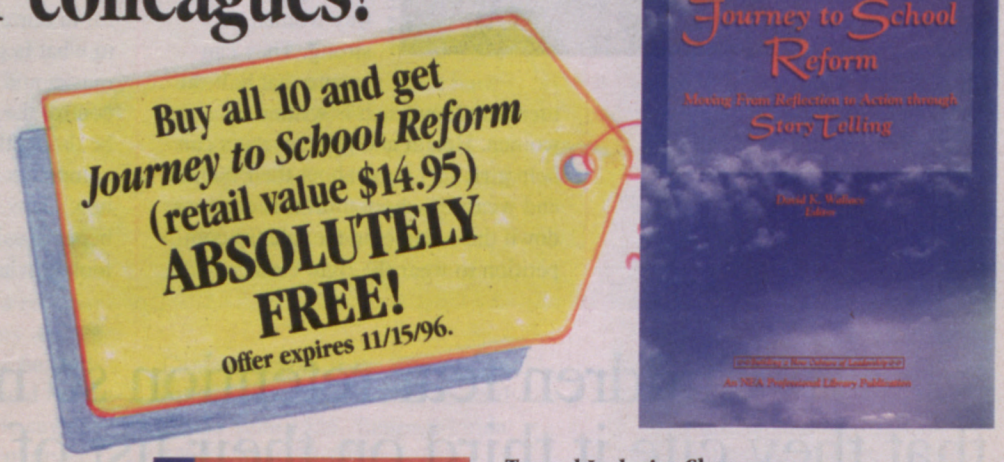
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Written *by* teachers *for* teachers, each title focuses on a specific school reform challenge confronting K–12 teachers nationwide. Each user-friendly volume brings you the personal stories of six or more teachers who have explored what works and what doesn't.

Multi-Age Classrooms
These six engaging stories will help your team create multi-age classes that meet the needs of all students. You'll find out how to tailor your curriculum to a mixed-age group, foster cooperative learning, and increase student performance levels.
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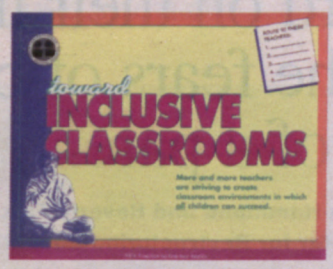

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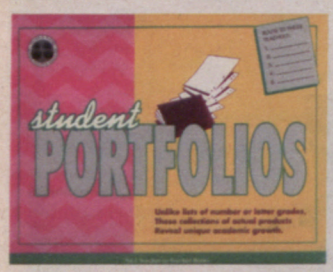

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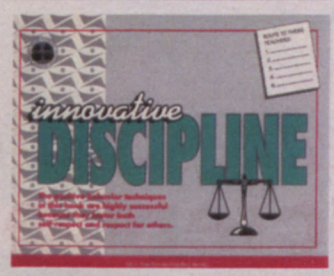

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Learn techniques for handling the many challenges that accompany school-based change (i.e. faculty and community resistance, time constraints, and group decision making).
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This book shows you how to tap each student's unique learning capabilities. Find out how these teachers incorporated Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences into daily learning activities.
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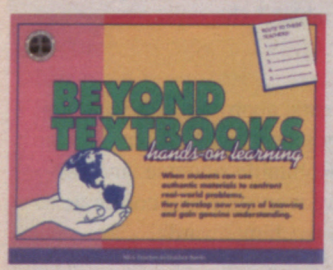

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The teachers in this book tell how they created lively learning communities using authentic materials and community resources.
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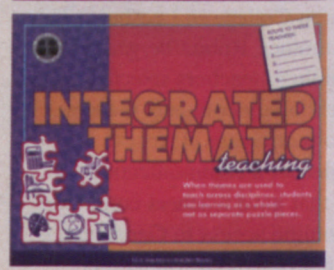

Integrated Thematic Teaching
You'll learn to successfully interweave disciplines into a tapestry that makes your curriculum come alive. You'll discover how monthly and year-long themes can develop critical thinking skills and enhance student learning.
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Building Parent Partnerships
This book helps you find just the right building blocks for greater parent involvement in your school.
96 pp., Stock # 2911-9-00-BA,
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teachers smiling? the inside scoop—

TeacherTV™ Video Collection

Taped in schools across the country, TeacherTV is an award-winning series that provides real-life solutions to the challenges facing students and staff in America's schools. After viewing these videos, you'll be able to apply new teacher-tested tips and insights in *your* school.

Buy the book and get the related video FOR JUST $9.95!*

**For every book purchased at the member price, a video may be purchased for $9.95. This offer is valid through 11-15-96 for NEA Members only.*

■ **New Age Learning: Cross-Age Learning**
This video highlights learning across generations and shows how learning is often enhanced when students work with students of different ages and with older adult volunteers.
1992, Stock # 7757-1-00-BA,
~~*$19.95*~~ *$15.95 NEA Members*

■ **Alternative Assessment**
Visit four school buildings around the nation to hear what teachers, students, and parents say about alternatives for assessing and communicating pupil progress.
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■ **Why Is Change So Hard?**
Systemic school change doesn't come easy—even with a committed staff. This tape shows the change process as a "work in progress" and helps you anticipate some of the problems you'll face as you cope with change.
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■ **Authentic Materials**
Learn how to use real-life experiences and phenomena to expand and enhance instruction. You'll also discover how this type of learning can enhance integrated thematic teaching.
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■ **Time: Restructuring The School Day**
This video takes you to the Colorado High School that parlayed the 4x4 concept into not only more in-depth learning, but also more time for teacher preparation.
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■ **The Inclusion Dilemma**
With appropriate placements, resources and support, inclusion *can* work. In this video, you'll explore schools that are discovering what it takes to make inclusion a success for *all* students—and their teachers.
1995, Stock # 7789-X-00-BA,
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■ **Effective Discipline Strategies**
Looking for classroom discipline strategies that work? In this video, you'll learn various strategies used by other educators for promoting and sustaining discipline among diverse student populations.
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■ **Teaching To The Brain**
Visit classrooms founded on brain-based learning and hear why this mode of teaching is so successful. You'll find out why some children have trouble reading and how dyslexia may be more than a visual problem.
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~~*$19.95*~~ *$15.95 NEA Members*

■ **Cross-Subject Teaching**
Explore ways to integrate learning across the curriculum, across the school, and even across the state.
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■ **Parental Involvement**
Visit two school districts that have successfully increased parental involvement—not just participation in fund raisers and booster clubs—but meaningful involvement in their children's learning.
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TeacherTV is a co-production of the National Education Association and The Learning Channel.

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The hottest new stories on TV this fall will be school stories

***School Stories*—the new TV series from NEA and cable TV's The Learning Channel—will change how Americans see our public schools.**

Every Sunday, starting this fall, ***School Stories*** viewers will marvel at the amazing and wonderful teaching and learning that's taking place in communities the nation over. A North Carolina program that's **transforming "mall rats" into accomplished young men** employers are eager to hire. The joy of a **Rhode Island teacher singing ballads** to help students master English lit. The **inspiration of bus drivers and cafeteria workers** struggling to fulfill lifelong dreams of becoming teachers.

You can see all this—and much more—just by tuning in to ***School Stories*** at 12:30 p.m. each Sunday, starting **October 13.**

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working for you!

Inside Scoop

All About National Board Certification

■ Definition, please.
National Board certification is a rigorous process that allows teachers to show they've met their profession's highest standards.

■ Who's behind it?
The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The Board was established in 1987 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Its goal: to improve student learning by establishing high standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

Its 63 members include representatives of 25 groups, including the NEA. The Board, now chaired by North Carolina Governor James Hunt, Jr., receives federal funds as well as grants from major foundations and corporations.

With help from hundreds of teachers, several major universities, and the Educational Testing Service, the Board has devised tests for teachers in six subject areas (see box).

■ Who are the "experts" behind the Board?
The short answer is teachers. Classroom teachers are represented in every aspect of decision making. More than half the members on the Board are classroom teachers. The majority of members on the standards committees for each subject area are teachers. And all the judges are classroom teachers.

■ How hot?
Hot and getting hotter all the time. There are now 380 board certified teachers, and thousands more plan to participate in the next few years.

■ How does it work?
It's a two-part assessment process. First, teachers must develop a portfolio that provides an overview of their teaching priorities, values, and style. Candidates can use student work, videotapes of classroom interaction, and written commentaries.

Second, candidates must attend one of 200 assessment centers, where exercises focus on content knowledge as well as age-appropriate and content-appropriate strategies. Teachers must take written tests, participate in discussions, and demonstrate their skills.

■ How do you prepare?
"The best advice I received," says Barbara Winkfield, who was certified in 1993, "was to study the standards in my field." Baseline standards in each field are published by the National Board and can be ordered (for $5) by calling 800/22TEACH.

Jim Thompson

"National certification was the toughest professional experience of my life, but it was also the most rewarding," says NEA member Evelyn Sanchez, an elementary teacher in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

■ Why bother?
"You can't help but improve yourself and the profession when you work toward higher standards," says Tchaiko Kwayana, a San Diego teacher who's certified in Early Adolescence/English.

"The assessment was the first time anyone ever asked me: 'Why do you teach that? Why is it important? Is there a better way to teach it?'" recalls Michigan English teacher Kathleen Dearborn. "We engaged in a grueling evaluation of teaching practice. It was one of the most beneficial professional activities I've ever undertaken."

■ Any down side?
It's expensive—just making the effort costs about $2,000. And it's time-consuming. Taking part in a lengthy process of portfolio development and peer assessment—and not being certified—can be disheartening to anyone.

Many states and school districts are making it a bit easier—and more enticing—by paying application fees, providing raises to those who are certified, and giving college credits for those participating.

■ Who backs National Board certification?
Just about every major education organization you can think of, hundreds of national, state, and local legislators, and, most important, thousands of teachers nationwide.

■ Who's throwing stones?
Some education and policy groups oppose the National Board, calling it a "union-dominated" ploy to get more power and money for union members. Others oppose national standards just because they're national—they'd prefer that all recognition be done at the local level.

■ Where's the NEA on this?
The NEA backs the Board 100 percent. "National Board certification requires candidates to look at their teaching and at student learning," says NEA President Bob Chase. "That's why it's an excellent opportunity for professional growth and a way to show the public that teachers are committed to improving and recognizing quality teaching."

■ Need more information?
If you wish to seek National Board certification, call 800/22TEACH for more information or to request an application. You can reach the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards at 26555 Evergreen Rd., Suite 400, Southfield, MI 48076. Or send E-mail messages to NBPTS@aol.com. For more information, call your NEA state affiliate.

—Susan Carmon
NEA National Center for Innovation

What's Ahead?

This year, the National Board will offer certificates in six areas. They are:

- Early Adolescence /Generalist
- Early Adolescence/English Language Arts
- Early Childhood/Generalist
- Middle Childhood/Generalist
- Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Mathematics
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Art

Portfolio applications will be available this month. Applications and partial fee payment must be submitted by December 1.

In December, the Board will release names of those who will be certified as Middle Childhood/Generalists and Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Art.

For details, call 800/22TEACH.

Students &

Good Stuff

Launched in Cyberspace
Teachers Guide to Cyberspace, written and edited by classroom teachers, includes dozens of innovative classroom projects using computers and the Internet. The book lists grants and fundraising tips and includes step-by-step instructions on using and creating Web pages. Two interactive disks containing classroom projects from various teachers are included. $19.95. To order, contact IMPACT II/The Teachers Network, 285 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013. Call 800/200-8284 or FAX 212/941-1787.

Television Treasure
Check out "Putting Kids First," the third episode of School Stories, the new TV series produced by NEA and The Learning Channel. To meet the needs of the children they serve, the staff at Teachers Memorial Elementary School in Kinston, North Carolina, scavenge for resources, barter with businesses, and form partnerships with social service providers. The show airs October 27 at 12:30 p.m. ET on The Learning Channel.

Integrating Disciplines
Integrated Thematic Teaching, a new Teacher-to-Teacher book from the NEA Professional Library, showcases teacher ideas on integrating disciplines to add meaning and relevance to any curriculum. $12.95 plus s&h. For the NEA member price ($9.95 plus s&h), use stock #2909-7-10-FG. To order, call 800/229-4200 or write to the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

It's in the Mail
The U.S. Postal Service's Wee Deliver In-School program aims to improve kids' reading and writing skills. Educators create a model town within their school, complete with an address and zip code for each student. Students assume roles as mail handlers or postal clerks and run the post office themselves. A starter kit includes a videotape, teacher's manual, and carrier bags. To get a free kit, send the school name, address, and telephone number to Wee Deliver Literacy Pro-gram, Corporate Outreach, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Rm. 10653, Washington, DC 20260-3126.

You know you have a problem when...

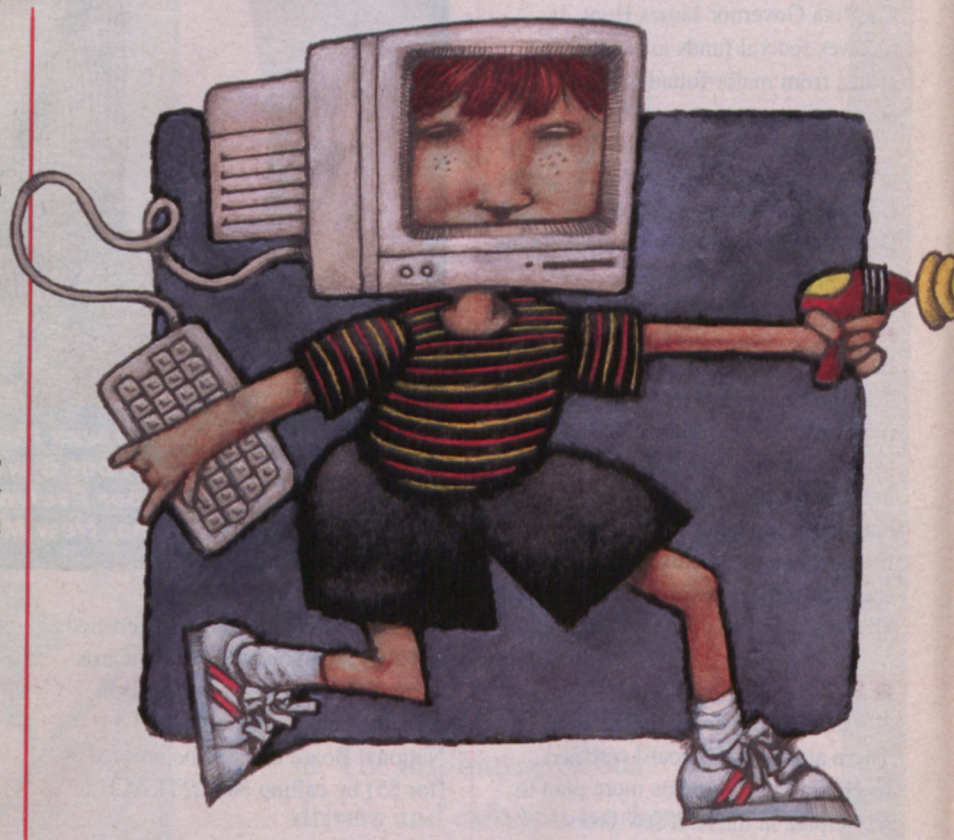
"A parent calls to warn you about a student's mood or behavior before the child even arrives at school."

Maddie Fennell, first grade teacher, Omaha, Nebraska

Dilemma

Learning Tools or Toys?

How do you ensure students use technology as a tool—not a toy?



I give students a plan of action and an outline on how to proceed on the computer. And I put a time limit on the task to be completed. I give students a disk to log and chronicle the activities they've performed on the computer. I read their disks at the end of the day and evaluate how they've spent time using technology.

Arlene Costello
Elementary teacher
Pensacola, Florida

With all of the wonderful things that can be done with computers to access the outside world, there's no need to mess around with things like student-to-student E-mail. The computer is not just something you put a kid in front of and say "have fun." You wouldn't do that with a book or a video.

Once in a while, we let students play games on the computer. But what we really try to do is monitor computer time closely in the classroom. The time to play is after school—we keep the computer lab open until 9 at night so students who want to play on the computer can do it then.

Lola Franks
High school business teacher
Wooster, Ohio

In the classroom, we keep the computer monitors pointed in a direction that's easily visible to all teachers. That way we can see how the technology is being used. We also have an extensive policy that describes areas of the Internet we consider out of bounds, such as game areas. While I believe students who play computer games may be learning, there's usually not time for that kind of marginal activity, and a student playing games often denies another student computer access to do real work.

Burt Lundak
High school technology teacher
Sand Point, Idaho

You have to teach students that computers are not Game Boys. We have fun, but we also use the computer to gather information. If I see students playing rather than working on their computers, I ask them to pull out their task cards. The task cards tell them specifically what they're expected to do while they're on the computer.

Sharon Chambers
Media specialist
Union City, California

Got Answers?

The new *NEA Today* aims to solve dilemmas by offering advice from educators who've been there. One upcoming question: **How do you deal with racial tensions among students?**
If you've got an answer, send it to us by regular mail, Fax, or E-mail at this address: dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Be sure to include your name, educational position, and phone numbers.

Strategies

You know you've been successful when...

"Your media center needs to expand schedules because students want to check out more books."

Judy Lindquist, Title I coordinating teacher, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

Delight

Mentors Fight Failure

In Los Angeles, mentors work to keep freshmen from dropping out.

Bob Riha, Jr.

For Los Angeles teacher and NEA member Richard Urias, being a mentor means being there when kids need to talk.

When El Camino Real High School joined California's LEARN school reform network last year, school staffers were asked to search out trouble spots and work to fix them.

The first trouble spot they found was shocking. Nearly half of El Camino's 900 freshmen had failed one class, and 125 had failed three or four. The news was especially surprising because El Camino had enjoyed a reputation as one of Los Angeles's top high schools for years.

Wasting no time, El Camino staff created a mentor program to keep failing kids from becoming dropout statistics. School staff identified kids who wanted mentors. Educators were asked to take on one student to tutor.

"The response was astounding," says Carol Donahue, the United Teachers of Los Angeles member who launched the program. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and clerical workers volunteered, along with the school's nurse, custodian, and campus police officers. Eighty juniors and seniors agreed to help their freshman peers.

Mentoring took many forms, including field trips, weekly lunches, parenting workshops, and tutoring.

"But mostly it wasn't about academics," says math teacher Gloria Morrison. "These kids needed someone to talk with, someone to listen."

"They needed a safety net," Donahue adds, "that linked them to academic and personal success."

"My student had a brother in jail and parents who didn't celebrate birthdays or holidays," says Richard Urias, a second-year teacher at El Camino. "I took her to the movies and dinner. I got her school supplies, and I gave her some ideas on how to improve in class. In one semester, she went from all *F*s to 5 *D*s and one *C*."

Shagufta Malik, head of El Camino's math department, helped an aspiring fashion designer who had failed five of six classes. "I organized her, watched her closely, and gave her incentives to do well," Malik says. The student received no *F*s when Malik was watching.

Overall, the freshman mentoring program had a substantial impact on the success of first-year high school students, says principal Ron Bauer. Dozens of students hiked their grades out of the failing range. And discipline problems were cut in half.

Mentors reaped rewards, too. "I realized that there are other students who want to be successful, but they may lack certain coping skills," says English teacher Naomi McCoy. "I have more patience with them now."

Given the success of the program in its first year, El Camino's staff plans to forge ahead with help from a three-year state grant worth $225,000.

"We're confident about the future," says teacher and UTLA rep Jack Koenig. "We'll add enrichment activities, we've got more money, and we've got experience under our belts—it's a combination that will guarantee increased success."

For more information, contact Carol Donahue, El Camino Real, 5440 Valley Circle Blvd., Woodland Hills, CA 91367, 818/888-8920.

Idea Exchange

Learning Styles

Here's a way to reach kids with alternative learning styles. When each student enters my school, our guidance counselor administers an inventory of attitudes about different tasks and activities. This inventory gives us a sense of each student's learning style and preference, which we share with all teachers.

Next we separate the student profiles into categories. For example, we group students who learn better with lectures, student who work well in groups, or students who respond to problem-based learning. We then tailor instruction and curriculum to the different learning styles. This process affirms the individuality of each student.

John Baldwin
Hamilton Terrace Learning Center
Shreveport, Louisiana

Kid Reporters

I came up with a program to help my sixth graders become better consumers of entertainment geared for their age group. To accomplish this, I had students form partnerships with local theaters, our local newspaper, and a local TV station, so they could attend movie previews with professional movie reviewers. The students then wrote critiques of the films they saw. To hone their skills, they wrote to movie reviewer Roger Ebert via CompuServe.

Their reviews were published in Ydrive!, a kid-oriented CompuServe forum, and on the "Kids' Page" of our local newspaper. The kids experienced first-hand what it's like to work for a newspaper as they researched, wrote, and edited their own articles.

Maggie Thelen
Sheridan Trail Middle School
Rockford, Michigan

Share Your Ideas

You can pass along your classroom tips to *NEA Today's* 2.2 million readers in one of these four ways:

- By Mail: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By Fax: 202/822-7206
- By E-mail: Ideas@neatoday.nea.org

Families &

Good Stuff

Community Connections
Need to rally "the whole village"? NEA's National Center for Innovation can show you how. Its *Pocket Guide to Building Partnerships for Student Learning* offers tips to help you make connections. Copies (in multiples of 10) for $.50 each, plus s&h. To order, call the NEA Professional Library at 800/229-4200 or Fax 203/933-5276. Stock #2003-0-10-FG. The guide is also available on NEA's Web site at http://nea.org/resources/pocket.html.

Promising Practices
Looking for examples, not recipes? *A Guide to Promising Practices in Educational Partnerships,* published by the U.S. Department of Education, provides models for partnership activities. $6. From: New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Stock #065-000-00839-4. For details, send an E-mail to cwarren@inet.ed.gov or call 202/219-2206.

Read All About It
The May 1996 issue of *Educational Leadership,* the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's magazine, is dedicated to family-school-community connections. Articles are chock full of examples of what works, particularly in bringing parents on board. And what if the community isn't on board? ASCD's 1993 guide, *How to Deal with Community Criticism of School Change,* is available for $6.95. Write to ASCD, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

The PTA in Cyberspace
The PTA's on the Web! For resources, message boards, conference and activity information, even links to state and local PTA Web sites, check out the PTA home page at http://www.pta.org.

Urban Assistance
The NEA Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education offers materials, training, and other assistance for local and state affiliates involved in urban school/community partnerships. Contact CRUE, 1201 16th St., N.W. Washington, DC 20036 or send an E-mail message to: NEAcrue1@aol.com.

You know you have a problem when...

"You're so busy your own child asks to schedule an appointment with you for help with homework assignments."

Sandy Raymond, elementary teacher, Darnestown Elementary School, Darnestown, Maryland

Dilemma

Beyond the Brief Encounter

How can you make parent/teacher conferences more than just "hello"?

We hold workshops for parents on how to talk with teachers and address conflicts between the parent and teacher. We also talk to parents and teachers about establishing a positive setting for discussions.

All this happens before the parent/teacher conferences, which are held over two days and at varying times of day—during school, after school, and in the evening—to accommodate parents with different work schedules.

And to improve attendance, teachers hand out the report cards at the parent/teacher conferences. More parents come when they know they can pick up the report cards and discuss the grades with teachers.

Gregory Gilliam
Parent resource coordinator
Richmond, Virginia

At our school, the students lead parent conferences. Parents pay much more attention when their own child takes them through a progress report—and students can't pretend they don't know about areas of difficulty.

It's great for the students. They prepare ahead of time with materials from their teacher, learn how to do formal introductions, and even watch a video showing a sample conference. And the parents have a chance for input as well, filling out pre-conference goal-setting materials.

Each teacher varies the format to suit his or her tastes. It's just another way to keep and hold parents' attention—this way, they don't come in already expecting information to be handled in a certain way.

Beth Christensen
Middle school teacher
Mankato, Kansas

At our school, located in a poor, inner-city neighborhood, we feel it's important to bond with parents by reaching out to them. That means going out into the neighborhood and visiting parents and students at their homes.

We bring books, share teaching tips, and talk to them about school. That way, when we contact them about a conference, they already know how much we care about their child, and they won't hesitate to come.

Jan Gable
Elementary school teacher
Augusta, Georgia

Got Answers?

How do you deal with a belligerent parent? If you've got an answer, send it to us by regular mail, Fax, or E-mail at this address: dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Include your name, position, and phone numbers at home and school.

Communities

You know you've been successful when...

"You hold a spring concert on the school lawn, and the neighbors stream out of their houses with lawn chairs to sit and listen."

Lea Schelke, high school music teacher, Trenton, Michigan

Delight

Rally 'Round Early Learning

NEA members in Virginia rally their community to get young children ready to learn.

When it comes to statistics, none are more startling—or stimulating—than the numbers that speak to the importance of early learning.

"In the first 36 months of life," explains Virginia Beach Education Association activist Vickie Hendley, "if a child doesn't experience mentally stimulating activities, reading, and abundant conversation, that child may never reach a level of acceptable academic performance, even with intervention and remediation."

"To an educator, that's a powerful statement," adds second grade teacher Norma Brooks. "It means by the time a child reaches my classroom, there's so much work to be done—and it's terrible watching a child struggle to catch up."

So two years ago, VBEA members began a concerted campaign to "rally 'round the research" on early childhood education.

The Association established a steering committee charged with improving the community's commitment to school readiness. Members came from city government, community groups, schools, and parent organizations.

"Parental involvement was the key," recalls Hendley. "We wanted to make political, business, and community leaders understand the critical importance of parental involvement in a child's intellectual development. And we wanted key leaders to know that they had a role in supporting that involvement."

Todd Panagopolous

It takes a whole village to get all kids ready to learn. NEA members in Virginia Beach get the ball rolling.

The committee set its sights high. Its first project: a "Summit for Children" held last May and attended by more than 5,000 community residents and leaders.

"The two days of the summit, featuring Jim Trelease, author of *The Read Aloud Book*, and child development expert Dr. T. Berry Brazleton, were very exciting. People bubbled over with ideas," Hendley says. "Never before had there been a cohesive effort to support young children and families."

The summit also gave VBEA the opportunity to recognize business and community efforts with Association awards for family-friendly programs and activities.

Since then, VBEA members have been busy hatching other projects, including:

- The "Van with the Plan" program, which converts vans into parent learning centers that travel through neighborhoods.
- A committee of child care and medical experts that will work to establish a baseline for school readiness.
- Adoption of the local "Catch 'em in the Cradle" program, which gives new mothers school readiness packets just after they give birth.

The benefits of the outreach effort extend way beyond a single program or event, Hendley says.

"By working to provide networking opportunities among child-serving agencies and educating business and elected leaders about the importance of supporting families with young children," she explains, "we're forging strong community ties that are bound to help children avoid becoming at-risk statistics."

For more information, contact Jamie Chapman, Virginia Beach Education Association, 445 Kings Grant Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452, 804/486-0202.

Idea Exchange

Because We Care

My fifth graders have discovered that art is the best way to a community's heart. Through a project called The Art Connection, funded through a grant from *The Weekly Reader's* Young America Cares Program, my students have made a wide variety of items—pillows, book bags for kids in wheelchairs, and dolls and animals for needy children. We've even made class quilts for retiring teachers, school staff, or other deserving people.

Our objective? To create a caring classroom and, at the same time, forge a link between the community and school.

Karen Coffinbargar
Elementary teacher
Addison, Illinois

A Network Works

A few years ago, the Greece Teachers Association created the Parent Support Network, which has been a great success. We provide parents with reading materials, parenting tips, even videos on topics ranging from dealing with an adolescent to helping children with homework. To increase our audience, the videos are aired on a local cable television channel, then loaned to those unable to afford them.

Patsy Robertson
Library media specialist
Greece, New York

Keep in Touch

As an elementary special education teacher, I try to remain in close contact with my students' parents and let them know of their child's progress. At the same time, I give them tips on how to help their child.

Because I know parents are busy, I produce a newsletter twice a month filled with projects parents can try with their children.

I also send home learning packs with fun, hands-on games that the children can play with their parents or on their own. Each pack is designed to address that particular special-needs student and includes a note explaining areas that the child needs to address or improve.

Tammy Belisle
Special education teacher
Rib Lake, Wisconsin

Health

Going Up in Smoke

Bill Novelli is the president of the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, a new, privately funded coalition that aims to reduce tobacco use among children. He recently spoke with Janet Samorodin, a staff member from the NEA Health Information Network.

Why are more teens smoking cigarettes?

There are a lot of theories on this, including increased marketing expenditures and marketing effort on the part of the tobacco industry, lower prices and heavier advertising of premium brands—the ones that 85 percent of kids smoke—and continued breakdown in family and parental organization and authority.

Whatever the cause, in 1991, 27.5 percent of high school kids said they smoked in the month before being asked. In 1995, that number went up to 34.8 percent. And we have to do something about that.

What's the best way to limit kids' access to tobacco?

Right now, convenience stores, gas stations, and major outlets for cigarettes sell tobacco products to kids without demanding proof of age. Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control show that about 75 percent of kids who buy cigarettes are never asked for proof of age.

What we need is an effective prevention program that requires proof of age before purchase, then levies stiff fines against those who sell tobacco to minors.

What are you up against?

The tobacco industry is very powerful. Tobacco companies spend more than $6 billion a year in marketing alone. That makes it much harder for the teacher, parent, or coach who is trying to tell kids not to smoke.

Their words are offset by an absolute rainstorm of marketing imagery that descends upon these kids at a very vulnerable and susceptible age. What we need to do is level the playing field so the teacher or parent has a chance to do prevention work.

Would the proposed Food and Drug Administration regulation on tobacco as a drug help?

Absolutely. It would reduce the ability of the tobacco industry to market to kids through advertising, free merchandise, and point-of-tobacco product display. When you see a cigarette display at eye level for an 11-year-old and it's next to the candy, it's not by accident.

A new FDA regulation would also reduce the ability of kids to get cigarettes by enforcing proof of age requirements, eliminating vending machines, and raising the point-of-display, so that cigarettes cannot be shoplifted.

Would you like to see tobacco banned?

No. I think that would ultimately create a huge black market. I'd rather see tobacco fall into disuse. If it falls into disuse among teens—and 85 to 90 percent of smokers start before age 18—the tobacco industry will be destroyed. If today's teens don't start, there won't be any smokers left in 20 years.

What will the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids do to make that scenario a reality?

We plan to serve as a sort of counterforce to the tobacco industry by lobbying at the federal and state levels, working with organizations like the NEA, and using advertising and media strategies. We want to change the environment so that the teachers and parents and coaches and others have a better chance at success.

What can NEA members do to help fight teen smoking?

Several things. First, they can work with kids in the classroom, parents in the neighborhood, and residents in community-based groups. Second, they can ask state legislators and members of Congress who take money from the tobacco industry to stop.

Trying to stop smoking without attacking those targets and the tobacco industry is like trying to do something about malaria without attacking mosquitoes.

If we can break the link between the tobacco industry and America's legislators, then the tobacco interests will be pushed aside.

From the Network

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Early detection can save lives. These resources can help.

- *Project REACH: A How-to Manual for Promoting Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection in Your School Community.* This notebook contains suggestions for activities school employees can coordinate in their buildings or district. For a free copy, write to the NEA Health Information Network, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

- The NEA Survivors' Network places active and retired NEA members who have had breast or cervical cancer on a speaker's bureau list. If you are a member who has had breast or cervical cancer and are interested in becoming a speaker, contact Rena Large at the NEA Health Information Network address above or at this E-mail address: RLarge@nea.org.

- To learn how to influence national public policy in the fight against breast cancer, contact the National Breast Cancer Coalition, 1707 L Street, N.W., Suite 1060, Washington, DC 20036, 202/296-7477, http://www.natlbcc.org.

- For a personal account of surviving breast cancer, see page 41.

October is also Radon Awareness Month. Radon is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas, which is the second leading cause of lung cancer in this country. Every home should be tested for radon. To order a $9.95 test kit and booklet on radon, call the National Safety Council's Automated Radon Hotline at 800/SOS-RADON.

Resources

- The Center for Tobacco-Free Kids offers free information packets listing what individuals and organizations can do to protect America's children from tobacco. Request one from the Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, 1707 L St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036.

- The Performance Edge Program, a tobacco and alcohol prevention program, asks teens to say "yes" to peak performance—on the athletic field, in the classroom, and at work—and "no" to tobacco and alcohol.

  To order a free copy, call 800/CDC-1311.

- The National Cancer Institute has materials and resources on tobacco use prevention and cessation. For details, call 800/4-CANCER.

Rights Watch

What's the Verdict?

Federal law bars single-sex classes, but the legal picture remains fuzzy.

School districts in a dozen states from Maine to California recently started experimenting with single-sex classes for girls, mostly in math and science.

In Presque Isle, Maine, school officials set up a special "All-Girls' Algebra" class. The Ventura, California school district followed suit, establishing special classes for "math phobic" girls. Michigan's Rochester High School offers a girls-only science and engineering class. And students at Marsteller Middle School in Manassas, Virginia, attend single-sex classes in a number of academic subjects.

This recent movement toward sex segregation in K-12 education was prompted, in part, by a 1992 report by the American Association of University Women. Called "How Schools Shortchange Girls," the report concluded that girls in coed classes are victims of subtle forms of gender bias—many teachers provide girls with less attention and encouragement than boys.

Other studies have found that girls perform better in single-sex classes. At Presque Isle, Maine High School, for example, officials claim that math scores for girls have skyrocketed, and their enrollment in advanced math classes has tripled.

Supporters of single-sex classes argue that girls need a "room of their own" because they have different learning styles than boys—girls learn "cooperatively," while boys learn "competitively." Boys, who tend to be more aggressive, often taunt, tease, and intimidate girls who speak up in class.

Segregating the sexes, they claim, raises girls' self-esteem and self-confidence, enhances their leadership and oral communications skills, boosts their standardized tests scores, and increases their interest in advanced coursework in traditionally "male" subjects such as math and science.

Opponents counter that such "pink ghettos" simply perpetuate feelings of inferiority among girls and reinforce the gender stereotype that girls need special treatment to succeed. Single-sex classes, they claim, are demeaning to girls.

"It's saying there's something unequal about girls, and they can't do well in an integrated society or classroom," argues Rosemary Dempsey, vice-president of the National Organization for Women.

Or as Supreme Court Justice William Brennan once observed, efforts to "protect" girls and women too often actually put them "not on a pedestal, but in a cage."

Bob Riha, Jr.

Ventura, California teacher Pam Belitsky is surrounded by some of the students in her "Math PLUS" class.

Sociological and pedagogical arguments aside, is it legal for the public schools to maintain single-sex classes?

The short answer is no. The federal law known as Title IX outlaws sex discrimination by schools that receive federal funds. And Title IX regulations specifically prohibit public schools from denying a student admission to "any course" on the "basis of sex."

There are only three exceptions: contact sports, sex ed classes, and choruses. (A "grandfather clause" also exempts existing single-sex schools.)

The U.S. Department of Education, which enforces Title IX, recently has cracked down on school districts that experiment with single-sex classes.

Last year, for example, the Presque Isle school district settled a Department of Education Title IX complaint by agreeing to admit male students to its all-girl algebra class. The revised course—called "College Algebra I (Emphasis on Women in Mathematics)"—focuses on the contributions of women in mathematics and "career opportunities for women in math and science."

The Ventura Unified School District also responded to an Education Department investigation by opening its girls' math class to boys and renaming it "Math PLUS (Power Learning for Underrepresented Students)." According to recent media reports, however, no boys have signed up for the new class.

On the flip side, a Michigan federal court in 1991 stopped the implementation of a plan by the Detroit Board of Education to create three all-male "academies" for preschool through fifth grade students.

For some, the remedy for gender bias in education is not to provide the "safe haven" of single-sex classes, which Michigan researcher Valerie Lee calls, "a bogus answer to a complex problem." Nor is it to provide girls with a crash course in "remedial masculinity" that teaches them to be more aggressive.

Rather, teachers should observe how girls learn best and alter their teaching styles to reach them.

As attorney Sara Mandelbaum urges, "Teachers need to discipline boys who ridicule girls and demonstrate that girls have valuable contributions to make."

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

Resources

Gender equity experts are divided on the value of single-sex classes. A well-known pair of gender experts, David Sadker and his daughter Jacqueline, say that when students are separated by race or gender, one group—the one least valued—ends up with fewer resources and a weaker education.

"This is especially worrisome," they say, "at a time when funds for education are being cut, and funds for girls and women are being eliminated."

Still, the Sadkers say, single-sex schools are providing some powerful lessons for improving public schools. They suggest establishing a few short-term, single-sex programs that can serve as laboratories for teacher training.

Peggy Orenstein, author of *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem and the Confidence Gap,* says the focus should be placed on how to make coeducational classrooms work for both girls and boys.

She advocates pushing for "mandatory teacher training in how to encourage girls to speak up in class, textbooks that include women's contributions to science and math, better sports programs for girls, clear rules against sexual harassment, and comprehensive sex-education programs."

For more information about gender equity in education, contact the:

- National Education Association, Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-7770.
- American Association of University Women, 111 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 800/225-9998. On the Web: http://www.aauw.org.
- Women's Educational Equity Act Resource Center, Education Development Center, Inc., 800/225-3088. E-mail: WEEAPUB@edc.org. On the Web: http://www.edc.org/CEEC/WEEA/index.html.
- On single-sex classes: "Single-Sex Schooling: Perspectives From Practice and Research," Vol. I, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OR-94-3152), Dec. 1993. U.S. Department of Education, OERI, Office of Research, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20208.

—Tasha McGuthrie
NEA Human and Civil Rights

Bits & Bytes

New & Noteworthy

Math Laps
"Turbo Math Facts 3.0" uses a race track setting to help students with basic math skills. An interactive race puts the student at the wheel to master basic skills, while another feature provides a personal math tutor. This Nordic Software CD-ROM works with both PC and Mac. $59.95. Call 402/488-5086.

Internet in Practice
NetLearning: Why Teachers Use the Internet, written by two teachers, uses actual experiences to illustrate Internet problems in the classroom, features tips on how to integrate the Net into the curriculum, and includes a CD-ROM to get readers started. $24.95. O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., 103 Morris St., Suite A, Sebastopol, CA 95472. 800/998-9938. View an excerpt at (http://www.ora.com/info/netlearn).

Ed Stats—Big Time
"EdSearch 1995: Education Statistics on Disk," a computer program that runs under Dos, consists of a searchable database of education statistics published by the National Center for Education Statistics—more than 2,000 tables, charts, and text files. All this can be downloaded at (http://www.ed.gov/NCES/pubs/E95/readme.html).

Net Monitor
"Net Nanny," an Internet content monitoring program, allows you to monitor and screen URLs, news groups, IRC channels, FTPs, E-mail, non-Internet BBSs, words, phrases, and personal information. Download an evaluation copy at (http://www.netnanny.com/netnanny). Added features: a starter dictionary that can be tailored to your needs and a frequently asked question page.

Ocean Typography
NASA has a free CD-ROM available on the TOPEX/Poseidon mission, which is providing information on ocean typography. The CD, which contains digital video, audio, images, and text captions, runs on both PC and Mac formats and can be ordered online at (http://podaac-www.jpl.nasa.gov/tecd.html).

Friendly Users

Finding Grizzly Details

Who:
Gail Bray, government teacher, Boise High School, Boise, Idaho

E-mail address:
WHKK97B@prodigy.com

What:
A government teacher stirs debate when she requires students to use the Internet as a research tool.

Inspiration:
"For three weeks, the seniors at Boise High argue nearly every day. And on those days they aren't arguing with each other, they're *thinking* about what to argue about the next day. As a teacher, I'm proud to say that I encourage this type of behavior.

"You see my seniors—as part of their government requirement—have to take part in a mock state legislature. They take up real bills being considered in Idaho, research them, and then meet as a legislature and consider their merits.

"And this year's simulation, thanks to the Internet, proved to be the best one yet.

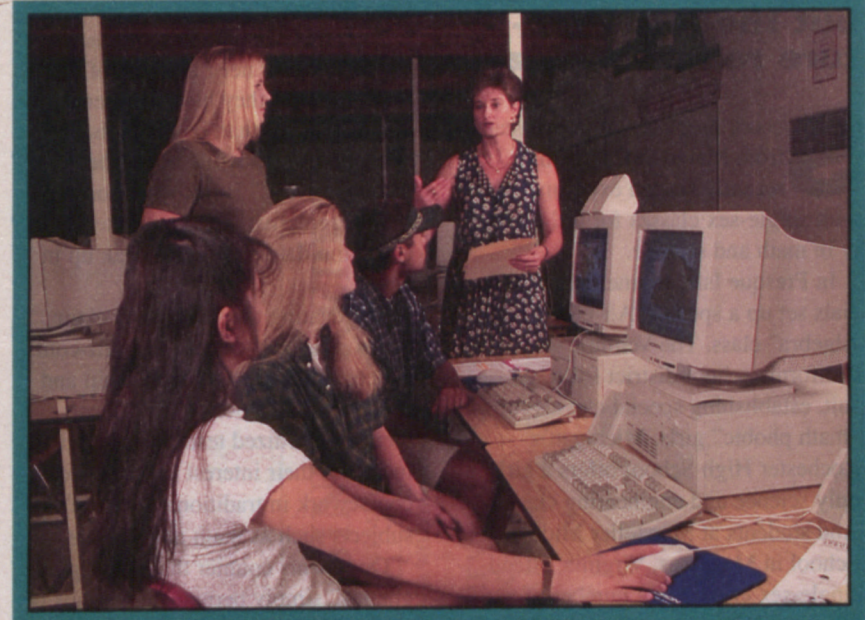
"I required my students to conduct part of their research on the World Wide Web, so they'd get on the Information Superhighway and see that there are alternatives to the library when it comes to research.

"I'm glad I did. Working with computers naturally sparked their interest—all kids like computers, right?—and they were stunned by the wealth of information available on the Net.

"For example, one student was researching a resolution against the re-entry of the grizzly bear to Idaho. He typed in 'grizzly bear' in the search area, and moments later several articles were brought up. One site in Canada gave him everything he was looking for: facts about the grizzly, the role it plays in the environment, and arguments for and against the containment of the animal.

"Doing research on the Internet enhanced the overall assignment. The quality of debate improved because the kids could get more information—and they could get to it more easily.

"The Internet is the Industrial Revolution of the 21st century. Teachers need to jump right in there. They shouldn't worry whether or not they can do the mechanics—if anything, their kids will teach them."



Andrew Rafkind

Gail Bray has taken research out of the stacks and onto the Internet for her government students.

Click:
"Working with computers isn't as foreboding as researching in the stacks, having hundreds of books staring you in the face. Instead, students look at a screen and quickly scan summaries of articles—leaving more time to ponder the 'big questions.'"

More About:
Students can contribute to this election year's political dialogue—and become more technologically literate—thanks to a program touring the nation called Zip-Across-America. Students in grades 4-8 submit letters to the President, have digital photos taken, and record voice clips on issues most important to them. Letters—compiled on Zip disks—will be presented to the White House following the presidential inauguration in January. To participate, call 800/276-1431.

Bytes for Beginners

Vast quantities of information await on the Internet. Millions of Americans are aching to learn this info. Who can bring them together? Educators.

That's why the "KickStart Initiative," a report from the U.S. Advisory Council on the National Information Infrastructure, deems educators critical in (to quote the subtitle) "Connecting America's Communities to the Information Superhighway."

Some actions educators should be taking in this role include:

- Addressing legislative bodies on the importance of school connectivity.
- Using technology information to teach students how to be "lifelong learners and problem solvers."
- Helping children to use the new technologies, especially those who can't afford this technology at home.
- Seeing that technology training is stressed in teacher training programs.
- Preparing specifications and programs that deal with the concerns of "intellectual property rights, privacy, and security."

This report is available at (http://www.benton.org/KickStart). For a printed copy, send $12 to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 or call 202/512-1800.

Click Here

A 'KickStart' for Education

"We are only beginning to tap the exciting potential of information technology to improve and transform education," says Edward McCracken, chairman of Silicon Graphics Inc., a premier international computer technology firm based in California.

As co-chair of the presidentially appointed U.S. Advisory Council on the National Information Infrastructure, McCracken led a group of corporate leaders, public officials—and one K-12 educator, NEA member Bonnie Bracey from Virginia—as they examined how to guide communities that want to "kickstart" their schools, libraries, and other institutions onto the Information Superhighway. He recently reflected on the council's work and its highly publicized report, the "KickStart Initiative."

What are the big lessons from 'KickStart'?

So much attention has been focused on the wiring, hardware, and software expenditures that one of the most important resources has been ignored—the preparation of staff.

While we knew that we needed to do a better job preparing educators to use technology to improve instruction, we initially underestimated the seriousness of this issue. It is clear that, from the beginning, we must do a better job of allocating the time and financial resources that technology implementation demands.

Educators are being asked not simply to utilize new equipment, but to fundamentally transform their institutional practices. This is a big job, but it is happening.

What would you say to critics who call technology merely the latest "silver bullet" to fix all that ails education?

I believe that school improvement is never the result of a single element. What came out of the KickStart report, and what is reflected in my own experience, is that the use of technology must be part of an overall systemic effort to improve education.

Parental involvement, individual instruction, active learning, self-motivation, and more comprehensive assessment are important in themselves, and all can be greatly advanced through the use of technology.

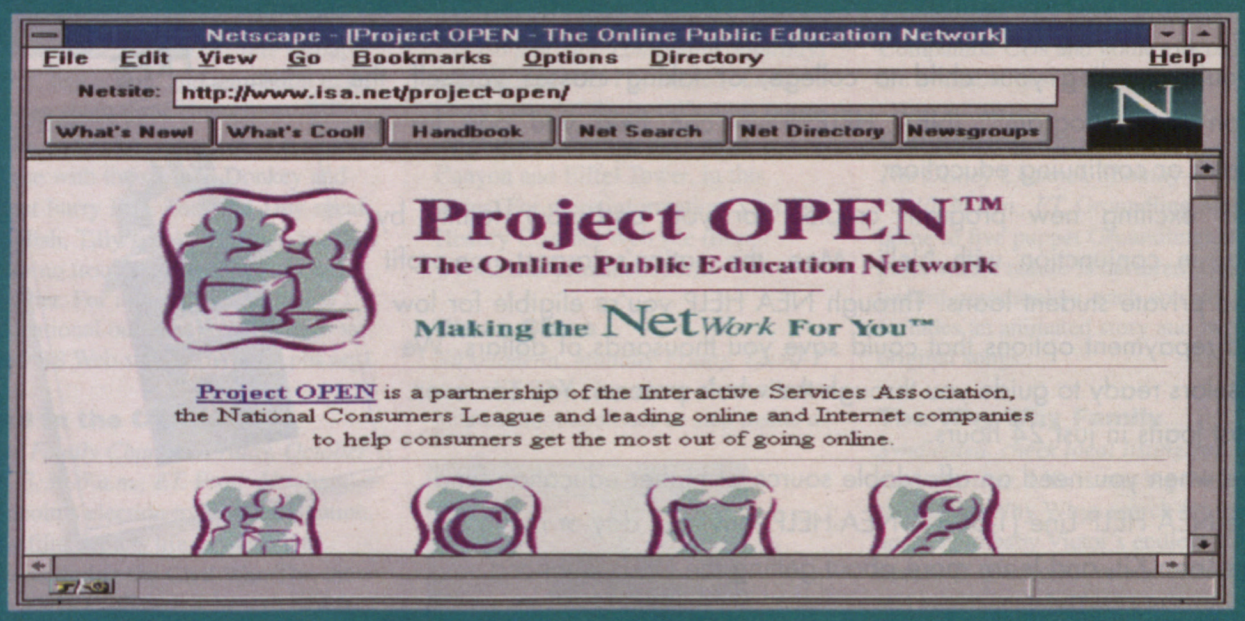
When you see students studying astronomy with images provided through NASA, when you find students labeled "learning disabled" performing at the highest levels through technology, when you discover parents connected daily to events in their children's school, when you see inner-city students engaged in virtual field trips to remote parts of the world, it gives us a glimpse of the potential that information technology has to improve education and lives.

Why did this council—whose members were mostly corporate leaders—focus so much on education instead of traditional business issues?

On a practical basis, commerce and education are directly linked. So while I like to think that corporate leaders care about education because ethically it is the right thing to do, I also know that we have real, practical concerns as well.

With technology and information an increasingly important part of the American economy, businesspeople recognize that their future depends on the quality of the human resource. We will remain competitive in a global economy only if our students perform at world-class levels and embrace the concept of life-long learning.

Screen Shot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Project OPEN™
The Online Public Education Network
Making the NetWork For You™
Project OPEN is a partnership of the Interactive Services Association, the National Consumers League and leading online and Internet companies to help consumers get the most out of going online.

The Project OPEN site (http://www.isa.net/project-open)—with information on parental empowerment, intellectual property rights, consumer protection, and privacy—promotes the "safe and responsible use of the online and Internet medium." For the brochure "How to Get the Most Out of Going Online," check the site or call 800/466-OPEN.

Web Winners

Vaulting Vocabulary
Students can take the Wordsmart challenge to find their vocabulary level (rated A thru J) at (http://www.wordsmart.com/quiz.cgi). This site demonstrates the vocabulary building software Wordsmart, which can be ordered at the site for $29.95.

Science Buffs
San Francisco's Exploratorium online (http://www.exploratorium.edu) includes features such as "What's New in the World of Science" and a list of links to cool sites that changes monthly (past links featured a photo exhibit on Remembering Nagasaki and a step-by-step dissection of a cow's eye).

Ask an Expert
Have a burning research question that requires the advice of an expert? Visit the "Ask an Expert" page (http://www.askanexpert.com/p/ask.html), where experts on subjects from A to Z can be E-mailed for information. Some linked pages have answers to previously asked questions.

Educational Networking
The Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology recently held a workshop and commissioned a series of white papers on the topic of educational networking. At (http://www.ed.gov/Technology/Futures/), you'll find the workshop report, the white papers, and a site where you can express your opinions on educational networking and read the views of others.

Student Writers
The Concord Review, a journal that publishes the academic work of secondary school students, is on the Web at (http://www.tcr.org). Sample published essays are included on the site, as well as submission requirements and information on the $1,000 Emerson Prize that the magazine awards.

Staff Survey
Trying to design a computer survey for staff at your school? Try downloading the one at (http://www.mccsc.edu/survey.html). It assesses staff needs and interests as well as their skill levels. It can be used as is, or as a basis for a survey of your own.

Parents Graduate Students Continuing Education Students

If you're paying for college, you may need

H.E.L.P.

Introducing the NEA Higher Education Loan Program.[SM]
Call 1-888-4-NEA-HELP
for your FREE NEA College Loan Kit today.

Now, whether you're sending your child to college, or taking classes yourself, the NEA Higher Education Loan Program[SM] (NEA HELP[SM]) — can help you pay for an undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education.

NEA HELP is an exciting new program created for you and your family by NEA Member Benefits, in conjunction with Nellie Mae, the nation's largest non-profit provider of federal and private student loans. Through NEA HELP you're eligible for low member-only rates and repayment options that could save you thousands of dollars. We also have expert counselors ready to guide you through the whole process. You can even be prequalified for most loans in just 24 hours.

NEA HELP is here when you need an affordable source of higher education funding. So call the toll-free NEA HELP Line (1-888-4-NEA-HELP) anytime, day or night, for your free NEA College Loan Kit, and learn more about getting the HELP you need.

1-888-4-NEA-HELP
(1-888-463-2435)
(NEA HELP Line is available 24 hours a day,
loan counselors available Mon-Fri 8am-9pm, ET)

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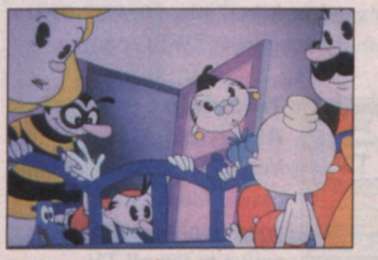
Heads Up!

TV Tips

Arthur

PBS, Monday-Friday, beginning October 7, 8:30-9 a.m. ET in most areas, check local listings. In this series, based on Marc Brown's *Arthur* books (below), Arthur and his friends manage to solve their third-grade crises with imagination, kindness, and humor.



Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?

PBS, Monday-Friday, beginning October 7, 5-5:30 p.m., ET in most areas, check local listings. In this new game show that teaches kids history and geography, arch villainess Carmen Sandiego remains at large, this time wreaking havoc not only around the world, but also in history. For information about support materials, call 617/492-2777.

Tots TV

PBS, beginning October 13 in most areas, check local listings. This half-hour series for preschoolers uses a mixture of puppetry, live action, and animation to tell stories about three characters—Tilly, Tom, and Tiny—who live in a secret house with their friend Donkey and guest Furry Boo. Tom and Tiny speak English, Tilly speaks Spanish, yet they have no trouble understanding one another. For more information and educational outreach materials, go to the PBS Web site (http://www.pbs.org).

Tad in the Classroom

The Family Channel, Friday, October 18, 3:30-5 a.m., ET. From Abraham Lincoln's election to his assassination, this film depicts life in the White House during the Civil War. The show airs early to allow teachers to tape it for the classroom. A free 24-page teaching resource is available for upper elementary through ninth grade students. For a copy, write on school stationery to The Family Channel, CIC Dept., P.O. Box 2050, Virginia Beach, VA 23450-2050.

Eyewitness

PBS, Mondays, beginning October 14, 8 p.m., ET in most areas, check local listings. Take a dazzling, fast-paced journey into the heart of the natural world. This series uses a "virtual reality" approach—each episode's subject first appears on a field of white (photo above), then moves into live-action sequences. The show recently won an NEA Award for the Advancement of Learning through Broadcasting.

Inspector Gadget's Field Trip

The History Channel, Sunday, October 27, 7-8 p.m., ET, continuing Saturdays and Sundays, 10-11 p.m., ET. Learn about many of the world's most popular places, including the Grand Canyon and Eiffel Tower, in this series. For more information, visit the History Channel Web site (http://www.historychannel.com).

Blues Clues

Nickelodeon, Monday-Friday, 12:30-1 p.m., ET. This play-along show allows its preschool audience to step inside a bright, computer-animated world and help solve daily puzzles with the help of animated puppy Blue.

Earth & Sky Radio

Check local listings. This radio program consists of two-minute reports on astronomy, earth science, and environmental science. The series is distributed free of charge to interested stations. Two informational booklets, containing articles and classroom activities, are available to teachers free of charge. For more information on bringing the radio series to your area or to obtain free educational materials, contact Earth & Sky, P.O. Box 2203, Austin, TX 76768, 512/477-4441, or E-mail earthsky@tpoint.net.

F.R.O.G.

WAM! (America's Kidz Network), Monday-Friday, 12-1 p.m., ET. Friends of Research and Odd Gadgets (FROG) provide hands-on science lessons that teach middle and high school students how to research and experiment.

Goosebumps

Fox, Saturdays, 10-10:30 a.m., ET. Based on the books of R.L. Stine, this series features the tales of ordinary kids who find themselves in extraordinary and scary situations. Companion CDs and home videos are available in stores.

Groundling Marsh

The Disney Channel, Monday-Friday, 10-10:30 a.m., ET. Groundling Marsh, home to five puppet Groundlings, is a place where nature is nurtured. Geared toward preschoolers, each episode includes an animated story and two original songs.

The Why Why Family

Syndicated, check local listingsfor date and time. Life is one big adventure as the Why Whys search for the answers to baby Victor's endless stream of questions. An edu-cational and entertaining half-hour animated series for grades 2-5.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, the computerized clearinghouse for children's electronic media.

School Stories

At last, a program that helps the public understand what's really happening in America's classrooms. It's called *School Stories*, a joint program of NEA and The Learning Channel.

Here's the schedule:

Connecting with Kids

Sunday, October 13, 12:30 p.m. ET. Two veteran teachers connect with kids in dramatically different ways. Find out how these teachers, including 1996 National Teacher of the Year Mary Beth Blegen, are getting the best from their students.

Better Business, Stronger Schools

Sunday, October 20, 12:30 p.m. ET. In Wendell, North Carolina, Siemens, a German-based multinational corporation, approached Wake High School with a proposition: "You give us the space, and we'll work with you to prepare your students for the future." Check out how the state-of-the-art training center is doing.

Putting Kids First

Sunday, October 27, 12:30 p.m. ET. Visit Teachers Memorial, a remarkable elementary school where the staff shun bureaucracy, barter with businesses, and reach out to parents to improve education for the poor children they serve.

The Drive To Teach

Sunday, November 3, 12:30 p.m., ET. To increase the number of minority teachers, the Savannah, Georgia school district set up a partnership with local universities giving school support staff the chance to become teachers. See how the program is working through the eyes of its students.

Class Act: A Teacher Profile

Sunday, November 10, 12:30 p.m., ET. Rhode Island teacher Mary Lee Drouin loves to use her singing and theatrical talent to teach English literature. Watch this class act share her talent and passion for literature.

BONUS: An added plus for NEA members, each episode of *School Stories* is available on video after airing with an additional 15 to 20 minutes of tips from the educators featured in each show. For details or to order, call 800/229-4200.

Heads Up

Free or Inexpensive

Kids Care Clubs
Community activity can be a vital part of a child's education, but it all too often turns into envelope-stuffing or fundraising. Do you want to get your class involved on a more personal level? Organize a Kids Care Club. A start-up kit will teach you this popular method. Free to schools and churches. Send request plus return postage ($2.24) to: Kids Care Clubs, P. O. Box 1083, New Canaan, CT 06840.

To see if our mortgage program is right for you, fill out this form.

1. I hate filling out forms.

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Introducing the NEA Over-the-Phone Mortgage Application.

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For more information on the NEA over-the-phone mortgage application, our $150 NEA member refund through 3/31/97, or any of our other exclusive money-saving features, just call the NEA Mortgage QuickLine℠ Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. to midnight (ET) at:

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(1-800-632-4968)

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Equal Housing Opportunity Lender.

HFNT1096

The Democracy Project
Election years can be great times to teach kids about democracy. As part of the PBS Democracy Project, PBS and the American Library Association have assembled a colorful reading list of 10 books for pre-teens on the democratic process. Free. PBS Democracy Project Reading List Request, 1320 Braddock Pl., Alexandria, VA 22306, 202/667-0901. E-mail michellee@TWBG.com.

Television Alternatives
You're home, but you still have to deal with kids — your own. Want an alternative to the ol' TV screen? Try 52 Alternatives to TV. This deck of cards holds more than meets the eye. Simple in design, it offers 52 innovative ideas for things to do. Best of all, only run-of-the-mill household items are required. Also available: 52 Cool Tricks for Kids, 52 Rainy Day Activities, 52 Silly Things to Do in the Car, and more. $6.95, plus $3.50 s&h. To order, call 800/722-6657.

For Young Einsteins
Want to spark a love for science in your students? Get a year-long subscription to *Dragonfly* (five issues).

Each issue contains science challenges, student investigations and artwork, science, poetry, interviews, scientific research, and online opportunities. Recommended grades three to six. $12.95 for an individual subscription. $6 each subscription for a class (20 or more individual orders), which includes teacher's companion. To order, call 800/722-NSTA.

Progress of Nations
Almost 18 million women suffer fatal or serious pregnancy-related injuries each year. UNICEF addresses this issue in its new book, *Progress of Nations*, which also examines the advances being made by nations of the world in health and education to improve the lives of children. Free. U.S. Committee for UNICEF, Public Information Dept., 333 E. 38th St., New York, NY 10016, 212/686-5522.

Learning Games
Want a hot "bip" on the latest learning

Heads Up

game for kids? It's the BIPQUIZ. Kids answer the 100 academic questions in each BIPQUIZ book by pressing the BipPen on what they think is the right answer. Different lights and sounds tell them if they're right. Every book has a different theme. Each book is $2.95 and the BipPen is $4.95. BIPQUIZ, Sterling Publishing Co., 387 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016, 800/367-9692.

Geography Awareness Week

Pull out your maps, globes, books, and CD-ROMS, it's Geography Awareness Week (November 17-23). This year's theme: "Geography: Exploring a World of Habitats, Seeing a World of Difference." A resource packet including 4 colorful posters, and a teacher's handbook is available from The National Geographic Society. For ordering information, call 202/775-6577.

Fire Safety Tips

When it comes to preventing fires, nothing beats education. That's the message of "Sparky's ABCs of Fire Safety," a video by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Geared toward kids in kindergarten through grade 2, the animated video featuring NFPA mascot Sparky the Fire Dog® is now available to educators, fire departments, and others in the community for only $9.95 (the cost of shipping and handling) until October 31. To order, send a check to NFPA-Sparky's ABCs c/o NFPA, One Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269.

Mental Health

It's easy for parents and school staff to recognize when a child has a high fever. But if a child has a mental health problem, that's much more difficult to spot. And preliminary studies suggest at least one in five children and adolescents may have a behavioral, emotional, or mental health problem. Now there's help for educators, parents, and others.

A campaign called "Caring for Every Child's Mental Health: Communities Together" aims to increase public awareness about the mental health needs of kids. Free materials and information are available by calling Center for Mental Health Services Knowledge Exchange Network, 800/789-2647.

Pitfalls and Potholes

Every veteran teacher knows them—those common errors made by new teachers. Now, there's a guide to help avoid them. The NEA Professional Library offers *Pitfalls and Potholes: A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers* by Barbara A. Murray and Kenneth T. Murray. This handy guide also gives you tips on managing student conduct, getting along with administrators, and much more. 56 pp. $4.95 ($4.50 for NEA members). To order call 800/229-4200 (stock # 2151-7-00-FF).

Correction

In last month's *Free or Inexpensive,* the telephone number for the audiotape ***The Monster in the Woods*** was incorrect. The correct number is 610-544-3131.

Awards

Human and Civil Rights Awards

Call them heroes, call them trailblazers, call them NEA Human and Civil Rights Awardees. The following individuals and organizations were honored this summer at the 30th annual Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner.

■ The Omega Boys Club and its co-founders, Joseph E. Marshall, Jr. and Jack Jacqua of San Francisco (California), won the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Award** for leadership and perseverance in applying Dr. King's nonviolent philosophy and techniques to the advancement of human and civil rights.

Marshall

Jacqua

The Omega Boys Club takes youth off the streets and guides them into college or jobs, using its four-pronged approach of peer counseling for incarcerated youth, violence prevention via radio, academic assistance, and job training.

■ The **Rosena J. Willis Memorial Award** went to the Northern Burlington Regional Human Relations Council, Columbus, New Jersey, for its leadership role in helping to maintain a positive learning environment after a racial dispute erupted in the local high school.

The Council's work was bolstered by strong support from the Northern Burlington County Regional Teachers Association, whose members, as well as students, parents, administrators and others in the community, joined to establish the Council. The Council was able to establish a program that has helped to build mutual trust, respect, and harmony among the students, staff, and community.

■ The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) was presented with the **George I. Sanchez Award** for its work in advancing equal opportunities for Hispanics. Since 1968, MALDEF has been at the forefront in the protection and promotion of civil rights for Hispanic Americans. MALDEF currently is working to counteract the misinformation generated by the California initiative that seeks to ban affirmative action.

■ The **Mary Hatwood Futrell Award**, which honors an individual who has made a significant impact on educational opportunity for women and girls, was presented to Rita Kissen, associate professor in the College of Teacher Education at the University of Southern Maine. Kissen founded the Maine Chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) and served as its first president. She's the author of *The Last Closet: The Real Lives of Gay and Lesbian Teachers* and helps organize and facilitate prejudice reduction workshops at numerous local colleges.

Kissen

■ The **Applegate-Dorros Peace and International Understanding Award** will honor the efforts of Gerald T. Brooker of Danbury, Connecticut for contributing to international understanding and motivating youth to work for world peace.

Brooker

Brooker organized and led the International High School Summit, held in Hiroshima, Japan on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The summit drew 220 students from 15 countries and 1,500 Japanese students.

■ The **H. Councill Trenholm Memorial Award** for leadership in advancing inter-group understanding within the education profession was presented to Willie James Jones of Coahoma, Mississippi, a member of the Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE).

Jones

Jones was a leader in championing equal salaries for Black educators and equal funding for schools with Black students. He also played a key role in the merging of the predominantly white Mississippi Education Association and the Black Mississippi Teachers Association into the MAE.

■ A second **H. Councill Trenholm Memorial Award** for advancing intergroup understanding within the education profession was presented to Linda Voss, eighth grade teacher in Waterville, Maine.

Voss was honored for her teaching of the Holocaust. Her students write to survivors to learn about their experiences, and the class hosts people who provide personal stories of what happened. Voss uses an interdisciplinary approach to show students the big picture.

Voss

■ The **Ellison S. Onizuka Memorial Award** was awarded to Laverne Fernandes Moore of Honolulu, Hawaii, an advocate for Asian and Pacific Islanders.

Moore is an activist and teacher-on-loan to the state. She wrote and produced a nationally used educational video, "Art Start with Headstart," which explores culture and individuality. Moore has developed a family literacy program for non-English speaking Hawaiians, a plan for early childhood education, and a widely distributed NEA awareness packet on Asian and Pacific Islanders.

Moore

■ The **SuAnne Big Crow Memorial Award**, which goes to a student whose achievements have contributed to students' worth and dignity, was presented to Tatewin Means, a Central High School student in Rapid City, South Dakota

When she was in the eighth grade, Means received state and national recognition for her research into the cause for lupus, a disease that commonly afflicts Sioux people.

A star athlete and dancer, she is the

NOW is the time

national board for professional teaching standards

With the 1996-97 school year underway, NOW is the time for you to learn more about National Board Certification. The NEA stands for high standards in teaching and so does the National Board. Of the nearly 375 National Board Certified Teachers nationwide, more than 200 are NEA members. You can be the next teacher in your district to participate. Call the National Board today for more information.

1-800-22TEACH

APPLY TODAY!

Heads Up

Means

daughter of Russell Means, the founder of the American Indian Movement, and Peggy Phelps Means, Indian education counselor at Central High School. Tatewin Means also is an activist who protested her school's warrior mascot and Indian-chief emblem and succeeded in getting both changed.

■ The **Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award**, presented jointly by the NEA and the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life an History (ASALH) for leadership and creativity in promoting Black History Month, was presented to bookstore owner and retired teacher Melva Jacquelyn Perkins of Orlando, Florida.

Perkins

In 1990, Perkins opened Montsho Books, a bookstore dedicated to teaching the community about the Black heritage. Though now a business owner, Perkins is still a teacher at heart. She can often be found helping children select books and pronounce words. Every Sunday, Perkins holds a Story Hour, with Professional storytellers reading to children, whose parents also are required to attend.

■ **The Award for Creative Leadership in Human Rights** was presented to Rudie Holmes of San Antonio, Texas, for championing diversity. Holmes, school board secretary of the Lackland Independent School District, helps the "physically different" through his diversity workshops and service as games director of the Texas Special Olympics.

Holmes

Holmes helps students through the juvenile probation program he developed for counseling and mentoring students at odds with the law. Through policies he formulated for the Air Force Equal Opportunity Treatment Program, he helps those who are "different in sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, and religion." And he helps poor kids through work with the Gateway Youth Camp, which teaches fifth graders alternatives to drugs, gangs, and violence.

■ **The Author-Illustrator Human and Civil Rights Award**, which goes to an individual for books that promote an understanding and appreciation of human and civil rights, was given to Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve of the Rosebud Sioux tribe in Rapid City, South Dakota. She is one of the few Native Americans writing primarily for children.

In her books, short stories, poetry, articles, and essays, Sneve strives to dispel sterotypes and help her readers develop an understanding and appreciation for the Native American culture. Her books include *Jimmy Yellow Hawk, Betrayed,* and *Completing the Circle.*

Sneve

If you've got nominees for next year's HCR awards, here's where to request nomination forms: NEA HCR, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Broadcast Award Winners

On June 29, NEA honored 23 radio and television programs with its 17th annual Awards for the Advancement of Learning through Broadcasting.

The Awards recognize broadcasters who make creative, constructive use of television and radio to advance learning for both children and adults.

This year's winners came from a broad range of radio and television, network, cable TV, even public service announcements. All programs aired between April 1, 1995 and February 29, 1996.

The 1996 winners:

ABC
ABC News/Nightline
Teen Sex: What'll We Tell the Kids?

WGBH-TV, Boston, Massachusetts
Public Broadcasting Service
WGBH Educational Foundation
Clarity Film Productions, Inc.
The American Experience: Freedom on My Mind

WABC-TV, New York City
Children First: Back to School

Mind Extension University
The Library of Congress
Communication: The Human Imperative

Minnesota News Network
The Cradle Will Fall

The Disney Channel
Smith-Hemion Productions
Disney's Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra

Oregon Public Broadcastins
Public Broadcasting Service
BBC Worldwide Americas
Dorling Kindersley Vision
Eyewitness

CBS
Tig Productions in association with RCS Film & TV and Majestic Films and Television International
500 Nations

KXMB-TV, Bismarck, North Dakota
Golden Apple Awards

KWES-TV, Midland, Texas
Kidzone

Fox-61 WTIC-TV, Hartford, Connecticut
Carey-Mac Productions
The Living Sound

NBC
The More You Know

CBS
National Geographic Television
National Geographic's Really Wild Animals: Polar Prowl

Nickelodeon
Lucky Duck Productions
Nick News Special Edition
Clearing the Air—Kids Talk to the President about Smoking

Public Broadcasting Service
California Working Group
Not in Our Town

WGBH-TV, Boston, Massachusetts
Public Broadcasting Service
NOVA

KCET, Los Angeles
Public Broadcasting Service
Lancit Media Productions, Ltd.
The Puzzle Place: Party of One

KCET, Los Angeles
Public Broadcasting Service
Storytime

KHQ-TV, Spokane, Washington
WCVB-TV, Boston, Massachusetts
Success by Six

TBS Superstation
Turner Original Productions
Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation
Survivors of the Holocaust

The Learning Channel
Discovery Communications, Inc.
Summer Productions
TLC Elementary School: All About Computers

C-SPAN
Washington Journal

National Public Radio
25th Anniversary

Announcements

NEA UniServ Intern Program

As part of its ongoing commitment to state and local affiliates, NEA is seeking eligible candidates for its 1997 Affirmative Action UniServ Intern Program for Ethnic Minorities and Women.

Individuals who successfully complete the 4 1/2 week training program and the three-month field experience will be certified by the NEA as eligible for UniServ staff work in an NEA state or local affiliate.

To be selected, candidates must:

■ Be an ethnic minority or female as designated by the U.S. Census.

■ Be an active NEA member for at least one year.

■ Have basic knowledge and understanding of the Association at the local/state level.

■ Be committed to pursuing UniServ staff employment.

■ Have excellent interpersonal skills

■ Be willing to participate in intensive training.

■ Be willing to resign all Association offices at the local, state, and national level.

■ Be willing to work in a learning environment during day and evening hours and learn new skills.

NEA does not guarantee employment of UniServ staff. Employment is a state/local decison.

To receive an application packet, send a letter of interest to:

Deloris Edwards Rozier, UniServ Intern Program Manager, c/o Brenda Vincent, NEA Membership and Affiliates, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

All letters of interest must be received at the NEA by December 15, 1996 by U.S. mail or Federal Express. Faxed copies are unacceptable.

Deadline for applications: January 31, 1997.

Teachers Hall of Fame

Nominations are invited for the Sixth Annual Teachers Hall of Fame Induction Program. Five teachers are selected each year. Eligible candidates must have at least 20 years of classroom teaching experience in grades K-

Heads Up

12. All nominations must be submitted on an official nomination form. To receive the form, contact the Hall of Fame, 800/96-TEACH. Deadline for for nominations: January 3, 1997.

Grants

On the heels of its groundbreaking report, *Teachers Take Charge of Their Learning: Transforming Professional Development for Student Success*, NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education has a new grant program.

A Change of Course will provide $525,000 in grants over three years to school districts, local NEA affiliates, teacher networks and centers, and other partnerships led by teachers to build high-quality and continuous learning into teachers' work.

Sixteen sites will be chosen for the first round.

Letters of intent must be postmarked by midnight, November 1.

For a copy of the guidelines and for details on how to apply for a grant, contact NFIE at 202/822-7840.

"Forget the myth that private schools are the best. Our survey shows many public schools are every bit as good—if not better."

Money Magazine
October 1994

THE SMART MONEY IS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

"You don't have to move to a wealthy suburb to find top-notch public education. Our survey spotlights high-quality districts where house prices are still reasonable."
Money *magazine, January 1996*

Americans trust Money magazine for the straight scoop on the most important decisions that families have to make, and Money is telling it straight.

Public education works for America. As a member of the National Education Association, the national advocate for quality public schools since 1857, you can be proud of your contribution!

nea
national education association

working for you!

Election '96

Politics on the Web

Here's a list of other Web resources you might want to contact in the weeks ahead to learn more about the candidates and the issues up for grabs this November.

- The official White House home page—http://www.whitehouse.gov
- NEA education and society—http://www.nea.org/info/society.html
- Government Web site search page—http://www.law.vill.edu/Fed-Agency/Fedwebloc.html
- Thomas, the official Congressional Web site—http://Thomas.loc.gov/
- U.S. House of Representatives—http://www.House.gov
- U.S. Senate—http://Voter96.cqalert.com

Don't Just Vote. Vote Smart

In general, it's a bad idea to pull a lever if you don't know what it'll do. But every four years, millions of Americans do just that—they vote ill informed. That's why Project Vote Smart, a non-partisan, non-profit organization, is providing a free copy of "The Voter's Self-Defense Manual." Crammed with information to help your track your elected officials' issue positions, voting records, and more, this 75-page manual is a must have during an election year. Free. Call 800/622-SMART. For more information on Project Vote Smart, visit http://www.vote-smart.org.

You Don't Have To Be 18

Teachers, there's still time for your class to be a part of the largest mock election in the nation. This year, millions of students will cast their votes in the non-partisan National Student/Parent Mock Election, the results of which will be broadcast live on CNN. Participating classes will receive a Teacher's Guide to the Issues and a "How To Do It" Guide. Free. 800/230-3349.

In the Light Lane

School Day Smiles

During the 1992 presidential campaign, a colleague's biology students happened to be discussing different bacteria cell shapes, commonly defined as bacillus (rod-shaped), spirillum (spirals), and coccus (spheres). After some thought, one student asked whether the teacher had heard about a recent outbreak of bacterial disease in the Midwestern United States.

When asked for details, the student replied, "Well, I heard something on the radio about an Iowa 'coccus.'"

Ron Miller
Manchester, New Hampshire

I was teaching my first graders about President's Day a few years ago. I'm African American, and as I was closing my lesson on the topic, I said, "Now remember, boys and girls, President Lincoln freed people like me."

A certain little boy went home and told his mother about the lesson. And she couldn't wait to come and tell me that she was very happy to learn that "Lincoln freed women."

It's nice to know that children don't see color.

Donna Hill
Amarillo, Texas

It was almost Election Day, and I decided to give my kindergarten class a lesson on voting. We had a pumpkin in our room, so I decided that we would "vote" on whether our jack-o-lantern would have a funny or a scary face by raising hands.

Then we discussed the upcoming election and the problems parents would have if everyone had to raise their hand to vote.

I explained that grown-ups go to a special place to vote, a place where everyone votes and the votes are easily counted—and was very proud of myself for teaching such a complicated topic to a group of 4-5 year olds.

As we were cleaning up, one little girl told me that she'd gone with her grandpa to vote. I asked her to tell the class about it. So she explained to everyone that they went to a place called OTB (off-track betting, for those of you not familiar with it) and her grandpa voted for a horse, but it didn't win!

Sandy Davis
Hamden, Connecticut

"I'll tell you what this election is about. It's about homework, and pitiful allowances, and having to clean your room. It's also about candy, and ice cream, and staying up late."

Drawing by Weber; ©1996 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

As Thanksgiving approached one year, I began leading my first graders in a class discussion about the Pilgrims. But first I wanted to see how much they remembered from kindergarten, so I asked who could remember the name of the ship that the Pilgrims came on. One enthusiastic little boy waved his hand knowingly and said, "The Cauliflower!"

Nancy Meyer
North Kingston, Rhode Island

I'm a school psychologist, and I frequently interview students about problems and situations. After a long interview, I'll typically say to the student something like, "I've asked you a bunch of questions. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask me?"

One second grade girl thought very carefully and then asked, "When you wash your face, how far up do you go?" (Can you tell I'm bald!)

Philip Bowser
Roseburg, Oregon

One of my kindergarten students brought in a bird nest for show and tell. When asked if the nest had any eggs in it when he found it, the boy answered no.

The class began thinking of reasons why the nest had been found empty —"Maybe the eggs already hatched," "Maybe they fell out of the nest and cracked." Then the boy who'd brought in the nest suggested, "Maybe the birds weren't married."

Margaret Palmieri
Columbia, Maryland

In my seventh grade science classroom, I was explaining that some mammals are marsupials, some are placental, and some are egg-laying. I told my class that clearly their moms did not have a pouch like a kangaroo, nor did they lay eggs like the platypus. Therefore, I surmised, their moms fall into the category of placental. Before we could discuss the placenta, Jason's hand shot up.

"But Ms. O," he said earnestly, "I just learned in family life (sex ed) last week that my mom is an egg-layer. She lays an egg every month."

Elizabeth Ogden
Charlottesville, Virginia

In my thirties, I made a career change. I decided to return to college and earn my teaching degree. One of my first jobs as a substitute was in a rural elementary school teaching a kindergarten class. While standing, one of the little girls tugged on my pant leg and said, "You're the first boy teacher we've ever had."

I wish we had more males to work with students at this age.

Robert Osborne
Lookout, Kentucky

Fine Points

Like many elementary teachers, I planned a mini-unit about Christopher Columbus for the first part of October. The unit lasted about two weeks. Students learned about Columbus, his travels, the boats, etc.

A few weeks later, as my students lined up to wait for their buses, little Meghan looked up at me and said, "Miss Tate, did you know Columbus was *dead!?*"

"Well . . . yes, Meg. Remember we talked about that in October?"

"But Miss Tate," she replied, "you never told us *that!*"

A quick classroom survey revealed that I had, in fact, left out that little piece of information.

Kerry Tate
Salem, Massachusetts

During a fifth-grade discussion of the Classical Period of music, I wrote on the chalkboard, "Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809).

A girl raised her hand and in earnest asked, "What's that after his name? His phone number?"

Howard Buss
Eaton Park, Florida

Michael stood by my desk, waiting for me to grade his math test. He studied the calendar on the bulletin board for a while, then asked excitedly, "Hey, are we getting a new moon?"

Beth Panitz
Millersville, Maryland

Got Laughs?

Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," *NEA Today,* 1201 16th St. N.W. Washington, DC 20036
Fax: 202/822-7206
E-mail: NEAToday@aol.com

Or post your story in the "Recess" area of NEA's Web site (http://www.nea.org) or in the "Humor" topic on the NEA Teaching & Learning Message Board (keyword: NEA Teaching) on America Online.

People

Calculating Star Power

Every Wednesday, kids from all over Baltimore County, Maryland race home to catch their favorite TV show. The stars aren't the Power Rangers or Batman and Robin.

They're **Bea Lozinsky** and **Ilene Uram**, and a toy monkey—talking about . . . math.

Once a week, the two teachers from Summit Park Elementary School broadcast a half hour call-in math show called "Math Homework Helpers." With the aid of a furry monkey puppet named "Adam Up," the duo helps kids with their math homework problems and gives away prizes for answering SuperThink questions.

"It works out great," says Lozinsky (left). "The kids are excited about getting on TV. And they learn it's OK to ask for help."

The show debuted last November. "Our producer told us that for the first few shows, the phones would basically be dead," Uram recalls. "But from day one the phones just started ringing off the hook."

Channel 36 is now expanding the show's time slot to an hour a week and is considering adding a junior high or high school version to the line-up.

How do these full-time teachers squeeze all this in?

"There's always time," says Uram. "Every teacher has made a commitment to education. I look at our television show as simply an extension of that promise."

Chris Hartlove

Off-Beat Teacher

Teaching and police work. **Anne Auxier** was torn between these two career paths when she graduated from college in 1981.

But the fact that she's been teaching high school German in Gresham, Oregon ever since then doesn't mean she gave up her penchant for law enforcement.

Two years ago, Auxier joined the Portland Deputy Reserve.

"I go out on regular patrol," Auxier explains, "just like a paid officer."

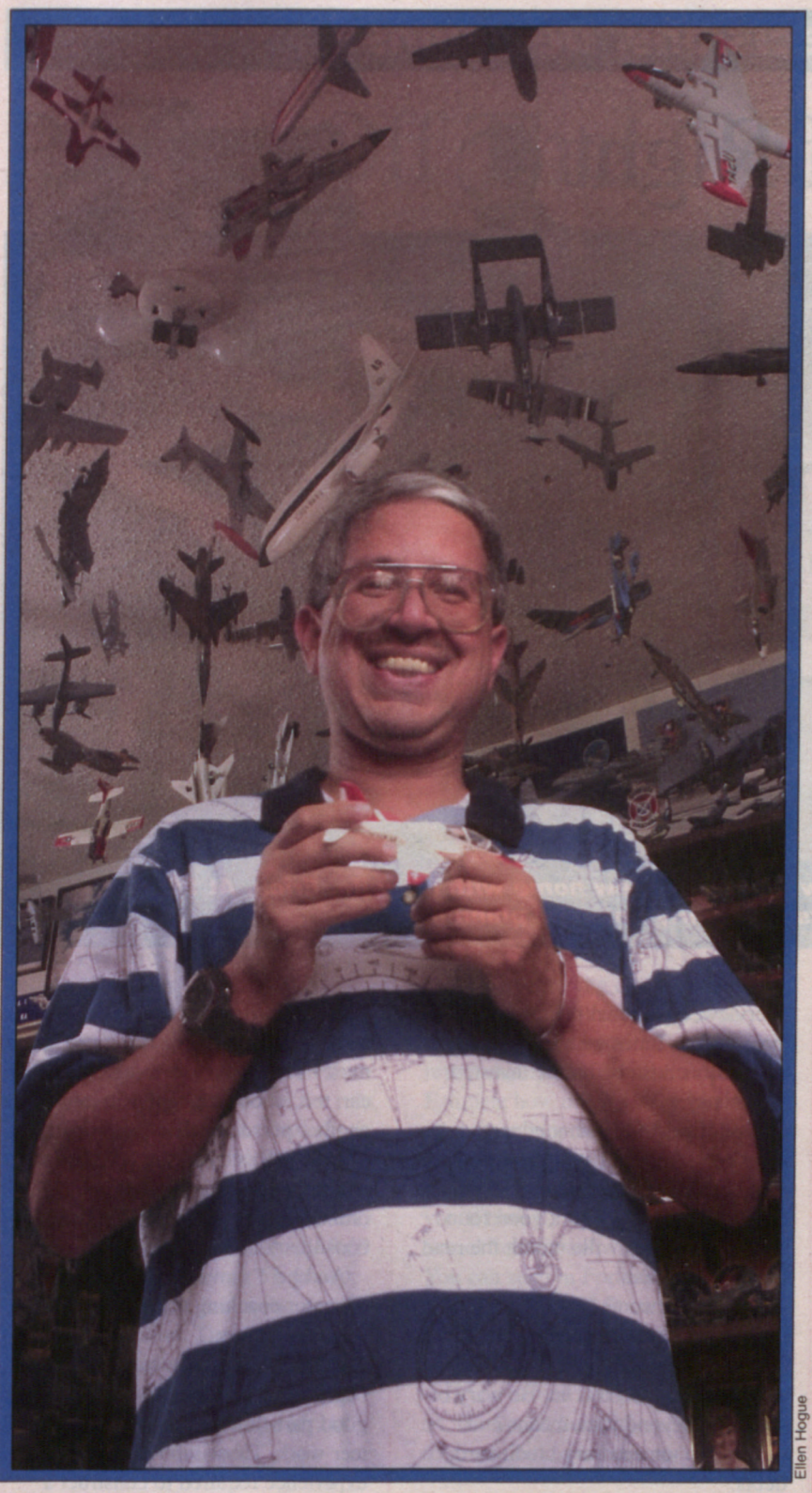
The Reserve works special details at community events like parades and fairs. "I need to put in 250 hours a year to keep my status," says Auxier, "but I already have over 500 hours for this year."

Shane Young

"My police experiences have been pretty positive. I enjoy doing things like handing out police stickers to kids," she adds. "But I have run into DUI situations, gang activities, traffic accidents, family disputes, and fights at bars."

At first, Auxier hid the fact that she was doing volunteer police work from her students. "I thought they might not approve," recalls the Sam Barlow High School teacher. "But I kept on running into my students while in uniform. I was so surprised that they were interested and even positive about my police work."

So now Auxier has a different outlook and brings stories back to her class. "My goal is to let young people know that teachers do more than just teach," she says. "I think they should know we have interests outside the classroom."



Ellen Hogue

Models on the **Runway**

George Ruiz knows that airplanes, helicopters, fire engines, and ambulances can make big impressions on little kids. Sadly, so can gangs.

To keep kids' minds on school—and off drugs and violence—Ruiz arranges to bring a dazzling array of big vehicles to elementary school playgrounds in the Corpus Christi area. "I try to give the kids something to reach for," Ruiz explains.

Once kids see them—and talk to their drivers and pilots—Ruiz hopes they understand the benefit of staying in school.

"The kids get fired up about it," says the Texas bus driver. "You ought to see the stacks of notes that kids have written me. One wrote: 'Now I know that my life is important to grown-ups.' To me, that means the program is working—big time."

Ruiz also shares his passion for aircraft on a smaller scale. The inside of his bus is covered with pictures of airplanes. And at his house, shelves and ceilings are covered with the 1,500 model airplanes he's built.

Steve Coleman

The Art of **Motivation**

Michael Marks has what every teacher dreams of: A classroom filled with kids who are disciplined, self-confident, and eager to learn.

His secret? No doubt he's inherited a gift for teaching—both parents, a brother, three aunts, and eight cousins are educators.

But Marks, a speech/debate/drama teacher at Hattiesburg High School in Mississippi, believes it's the performing arts themselves that help his students get in sync with school.

"Performing arts motivate kids," says Marks, "and this motivation spills over into their regular classes—they become more confident and disciplined in their lives."

Thanks to Marks's dedication, these students have had the opportunity to perform nationwide. They've even appeared on national television, taking the stage at an award ceremony where Marks received recognition as an outstanding performance art teacher.

Marks, though, isn't blinded by the stagelights.

"I have students who would be in trouble if they weren't doing four or five shows a season," says Marks. "This way, they're off the street and they have something to do. A typical school day just isn't going to cut it."

Adds Marks: "People have to realize that the arts are a staple, not a fringe."

Casting **Call**

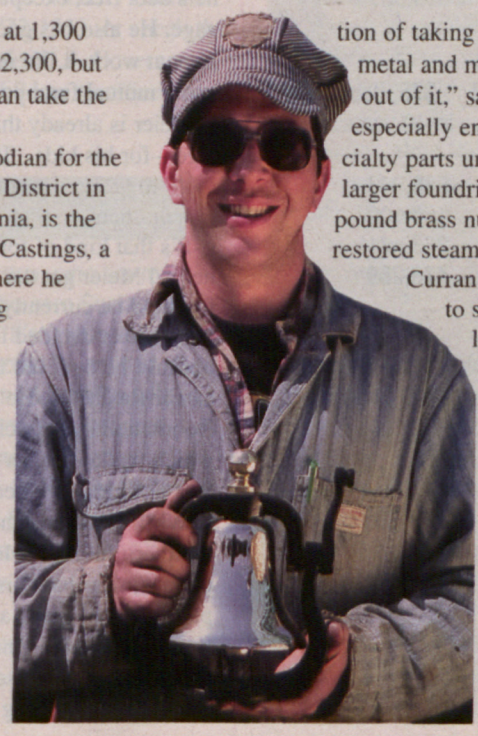
Aluminum melts at 1,300 degrees, brass at 2,300, but **Larry Curran** can take the heat.

Curran, a custodian for the Keystone School District in Knox, Pennsylvania, is the owner of Curran Castings, a small foundry where he creates everything from old-time locomotive parts to antique car parts.

He uses wooden patterns to make impressions in sand molds, melts down scrap metal, then ladles away. "I like the satisfaction of taking a piece of scrap metal and making something out of it," says Curran. He especially enjoys casting specialty parts unavailable from larger foundries, like a 69-pound brass number plate for a restored steam engine.

Curran took up the trade to survive during a layoff and pay for his hobby—collecting railroad memorabilia.

"With casting," says Curran, "you never know what you've got until you've opened the mold. It's like Christmas."



Keith Srakocic

Money

Go Figure

To people in their early twenties, saving sounds punitive. There's not enough money to stretch to buy all the things you need. But one of the most valuable things a young person has is time—and compound interest.

Compounding means your money can earn money. Albert Einstein, whose theories unlocked the secrets of the universe, called compound interest the greatest mathematical discovery of all time.

Consider this: If a 24-year-old puts $10,000 in an investment that earns 8 percent a year and doesn't touch it for 40 years, that 24-year-old will have more than $200,000, thanks to the magic of compounding.

Of course, few twenty-somethings have $10,000 to spare. But regularly putting money away is the best way to put yourself on the road to riches.

If you start at age 25 and put away just $25 a month until age 65, here's how much you will have, depending on how much your money earns:

4 percent	$29,648
6 percent	50,036
8 percent	87,857
10 percent	159,420

If you can put away $50 a month:

4 percent	$59,295
6 percent	100,072
8 percent	175,714
10 percent	318,839

If you can up it to $75, here's what you'll have in 40 years:

4 percent	$88,943
6 percent	150,109
8 percent	263,571
10 percent	478,259

And if you could put away $100 each month and earn 10 percent, you'd be on your way to becoming a millionaire:

4 percent	$118,590
6 percent	200,145
8 percent	351,428
10 percent	637,678

Decisions, Decisions

Starting off Right

Kevin Swank

Indiana teacher Mark Meier works on his new home with his wife, Erica. At 25, he's already reaping some benefits from early financial planning.

Young educators find that disciplined financial planning pays off.

NEA member Mark Meier, a math teacher at Boonville High School in Boonville, Indiana, got married in July and moved into the new home he bought with his wife, Erica. At 25, he's debt free, except for his mortgage. He also has good health insurance at work, a life insurance policy, and a mutual fund portfolio.

Meier is already thinking of college—for his kids. "If they would like to go to an Ivy League school, I'd like to help them do that," he says.

It's that kind of forethought that helped Meier get the financial foothold he currently enjoys. In college, Meier decided to major in math because he believed it would give him career flexibility. He'd also worked at Boonville High coaching basketball, which made it easier for him to get his first teaching job there.

While attending the University of Southern Indiana, Meier lived with his parents, who paid his expenses. He parlayed that break against a lot of hard work and planning. Meier had the good sense to use the money he saved to start buying mutual funds. He interviewed financial planners and met three or four times with the one he eventually chose before he invested any money.

It's not easy for young educators to get a good financial start these days. And certainly not everyone's in the cat bird seat at age 25. But a good foundation built early will smooth the road over the long haul.

So here are some tips for establishing a good financial plan early:

■ Get out of debt. Pay off college loans as early as you can. Be wary of spending beyond your means and racking up unnecessary credit card debts.

■ Establish a credit rating. You'll need this for most everything you do in life, including buying a home and getting a job. Get one credit card and pay your bills faithfully.

■ Get insurance coverage in place. Basic health coverage is a must. You must have liability coverage for your car, too, to cover you if you injure another person or damage property.

That will get you started. "For most young people, this is a tall enough order," says Barbara Pope, a financial consultant in Chicago.

And here's an extra tip if you're an educator coaching teenagers on their financial future:

■ Build a strong resumé. That can begin even in high school by choosing good part-time jobs, and even volunteer work. Those who do not have the experience required to construct a resumé should get to work—even if that means taking low-paying work. Focus on what you want to do rather than how much you will earn.

—Mary Rowland

Resources

■ Bank Card Holders of America, a consumer education group, is one of the best resources for credit information. It offers a variety of consumer guide books and—if you're already deeply in debt—a Debt-Zapper Kit that shows you how to pay off your bills most efficiently. To get a publications list, write to 524 Branch Drive, Salem, VA 24153.

■ NEA Member Benefits offers a consumer guide titled "Understanding Credit." To request a free copy, call 800/637-4636.

Ready for Retirement?

Putting Off That Gold Watch?

Facts and figures to consider about working beyond retirement age.

Name: Fannie Lindsey

Age: 60

Job: Third grade Title I reading teacher, Hamilton Elementary School, Hamilton, Alabama

Home & Family:
Single, residing in Hamilton with her older sister.

Years Until Retirement:
Three

Current Challenge:
"I may want to continue working after I retire, but I understand that being employed could affect my Social Security benefits. What is the impact, and do I have any alternatives?"

Options:
All Social Security benefits are subject to an earnings test. Under the rule, if your earnings exceed a certain limit, your benefits will be reduced.

In 1996, persons aged 62-64 must give up $1 in benefits for each $2 they earn over $8,280. Retirees aged 65-69 must give up $1 for every $3 earned above $12,500. The limits rise each year with inflation. There's no reduction in benefits for those age 70 or older.

For example, if you're age 66 and you earn $15,000 this year, your

Rod Whited

Fannie Lindsey is contemplating staying in the classroom past retirement age, but she needs to know how that would affect her benefits.

Social Security benefit will be reduced by $833. (That's $15,000 - $12,500 limit = $2,500. Divide this by 3—you lose $1 for every $3 over the limit—to get $833.)

At the beginning of each year, anyone under age 70 who expects to exceed the earnings limit should report that fact to Social Security. Estimate how much you're likely to earn. Your monthly check will be adjusted accordingly.

The following year, at tax time, you'll have to report your earnings to Social Security as well as to the IRS. You can send in Form SSA-777 (available from a Social Security office) or a letter with a copy of your tax return or W-2.

If you earned more than you expected, the Social Security checks you received will have been too big and you'll have to return the extra money. You can send a single check or repay in installments. If you don't file an earnings report and you were over the limit, Social Security will assess a penalty.

Conversely, if you earned less money than you expected, Social Security will reimburse your benefits.

If you don't want to lose benefits, you have the option of stopping your checks until you retire again. Some older workers choose to repay all the Social Security money they've received. That eliminates any reduction they took for retiring earlier than age 65. They're treated as if they never retired at all.

Alternatively, you can ask Social Security to suspend your benefits from here on out. When you retire again, your retirement age will be refigured, based on the number of Social Security checks you previously received.

For example, if you received the equivalent of eight full checks, you will be treated as though you retired at age 64 and four months. Your check, however, won't be refigured until you reach age 65, so if you re-retire earlier you'll have to wait for the adjustment.

Homework:
If you plan to work after you retire, you should talk to a Social Security counselor about your particular situation. Call the Social Security Administration at 800/772-1213, or check the Yellow Pages under U.S. Government to find the Social Security office nearest you.

Educated Investor

Q. My husband will be 62 in August and will begin drawing his Social Security. I retired last June from education and receive a pension from the State Teachers' Retirement System in Ohio. My question: When I reach 62 (or before), can I receive anything from my husband's earned benefit?

A. It depends. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 included a measure to prevent what the government views as "double dipping," according to Tina Cirillo, a certified financial planner in Columbus, Ohio.

That means that employees such as teachers and government workers who paid into a separate retirement system, rather than Social Security, must offset their benefits from that system against whatever Social Security benefits they would otherwise be entitled to.

That includes workers who spend some time in the private sector as well as those, like you, who are married to partners who earn Social Security benefits. "It's impossible to tell whether you would be entitled to any of your husband's benefits without knowing how long you worked, what your own benefit is, and so forth," Cirillo says. She suggests that you call your local Social Security office and tell them what you have earned through the Ohio teachers' retirement system. They'll be able to tell you whether you're entitled to Social Security.

Financial Finds

Personal Finance Online
America Online's Personal Finance Software Center has a myriad of software programs available to download. Programs such as home management, tax preparation, and loan calculators are a sample of what's available. Keyword: PF Software. For more information on America Online, call 800/781-5577 and ask for a free starter kit that will give you access to NEA Online, too.

Calculated Cost
If you're not sure when to start saving for retirement, the On-Line Cost of Waiting One Year calculator from Pension Solution can show you how much money you'll lose by not starting now. For example, it tells you that a 26-year-old who's thinking about putting away $100 a month in a 401(k) earning an assumed interest of 6 percent will lose $11,337.99 from retirement payout by not starting an account this year. (http://www.pensionsolutions.com/msi).

Estimated Benefits
Through the Social Security Administration's site on the World Wide Web (http://www.ssa.gov), you can transmit financial information to the SSA, which will then calculate your estimated benefits and send you a statement through the regular mail. Also available through this site: a "compute your own benefit" program.

Sound Familiar?
"Managing Your Health Care Finances: Getting the Most Out of Medicare and Medigap Insurance" offers advice from the non-profit United Seniors Health Cooperative on how to cover medical costs without tapping your savings. To order, send $12 to 1331 H St. N.W., Washington, DC 20005 or call 202/393-6222.

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The NEA Credit Card Program offers one of the best values available today. With no annual fee and preferred low interest rates, members enjoy a wealth of benefits with the NEA School Days or the NEA Premier Gold MasterCard cards. For more information or to apply over the phone, call 800/468-7632.

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Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*

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TRNT1096

My Turn

Life Connections

Years in the classroom give a Minnesota teacher the skills to battle breast cancer.

By Christine Norton

A few hours after I was diagnosed with breast cancer on September 11, 1990, I went back to school to speak to my colleagues and friends in the English department at Woodbury High.

As I talked, reality began to sink in—I had breast cancer at age 44. As I talked, the support and care of my colleagues began to carry me through the shock of diagnosis. My good friend Millie gripped my shoulders tightly, looked at me with those piercing "teacher eyes," and said, "Norton, you're strong. You can fight this."

I thought often of Millie's words in the next few weeks as I read everything I could find on breast cancer, spoke with women who were fighting the same battle, and tried to decide whether to have a single or double mastectomy.

Given conflicting recommendations from two surgeons, I began to feel the truth of a statement I often tell my students: Knowledge is power. All the information I could find about lobular breast cancer suggested that the chances of the second breast being cancerous were small. I decided a single mastectomy would suffice.

It wasn't long after the surgery that I got back to the familiar world of teaching—and got introduced to the unfamiliar world of advocacy.

I was shocked to find out that only $77 million was spent on breast cancer research in 1990. Only $77 million on a disease that strikes 182,000 women each year. Only $77 million on a disease that kills 46,000 women annually.

While my anger fueled my advocacy, my skills as a teacher improved my effectiveness. I was comfortable with public speaking, knew how to get people to work together, and always did my homework. After 16 years as a teacher of homebound students, having a trunk full of education materials wasn't anything new either.

Years in the classroom prepared me to continue even though success wasn't always apparent. I was used to "selling" products—literature and writing—to people who didn't always recognize the need and weren't always receptive to the message.

Terry Gydesen

Minnesota teacher and breast cancer survivor Christine Norton (center, blue sweater) attends a Komen Race for the Cure fundraiser held in the Twin Cities last year.

Years in the classroom taught me that little steps add up to big ones. When the National Breast Cancer Coalition organized a national petition drive in 1992 demanding $300 million more for research, many experienced people in politics scoffed at our attempt. But we collected hundreds of thousands of signatures, lobbied, and achieved our goal.

Years in the classroom taught me to keep my sense of humor at all times—even when the dog dragged my prosthesis into full view of my 14-year-old son and his friend, Nate, who later became one of my students. I even laughed when the teacher across the hall wanted to use my breast self-exam teaching model in her health class and asked, "Do you have your breast in the car?"

Years in the classroom taught me to see the little flashes that indicate success. I cherish the moments when someone hears my presentation, conquers her fear, and gets a mammogram. And I'm proud that funding for breast cancer research in 1996 is edging close to $600 million.

Working for increased funding for breast cancer research and educating people about breast health are a lot like working with student teachers. They are things we do for others—for the next generation, rather than for ourselves.

Educators are always looking ahead, working with and thinking of the next generation. But since my diagnosis, I see more clearly than ever before the need to fight for a better tomorrow.

Everything I do is for my daughter Kathleen and the young women that I teach. I hope we will know, in their lifetimes, what causes breast cancer and how to prevent a disease that affects so many. There are many legacies I want to pass on, but breast cancer is not one of them.

Christine Norton is an English teacher at Park High School in Cottage Grove, Minnesota and a co-founder of the Minnesota Breast Cancer Coalition. She's also been integrally involved in launching NEA's Campaign for Breast and Cervical Health.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. For more information, see page 24.

You Said It

Bill Fischer, editor

Remember that commercial where the little kid tries a cereal and the older brother says, "He likes it, Mikey likes it!"?

Well, I'm pleased to report that, like Mikey, you apparently like it . . . the new *NEA Today*.

We've put a sampling of your comments on page 46, but let me just mention a few areas of the new issue that are drawing your comments.

The expanded Learning section seems to have touched a favorable nerve. You're applauding the content of the two-page "Innovators" (on pages 14 and 15 this issue) for putting classroom teachers and recognized leaders in education on the same pages. Note that a two-page "Families and Communities" spread debuts this month on pages 22 and 23.

We're also pleased that you like the "In the Light Lane" column in the Life section and have sent us dozens of quite humorous items. Some have found their way onto page 41 of this issue.

Criticisms? Some wrote that the Learning section opening page photo of the four pre-teen girls was misleading, since there wasn't a story with it. We're thinking about that, but staying with the original approach this month (on page 13).

A few readers noted dropped lines on a couple of pages. These were corrected—but not before some issues were mailed.

All in all, your comments were very supportive, and we thank you.

Below are the results of last month's Debate poll. See page 43 to vote on this month's topic.

Bill Fischer

Your Opinion

Should schools limit Internet access?

You Said It:
54% Yes
46% No

"Firsthand Meet

AP/Wide World

Doris Kearns Goodwin

Remembering the Roosevelts

October is Roosevelt History Month—the first month to honor a President in the nation's history. To commemorate the observance, NEA Today *sought out Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of* No Ordinary Time—Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II. *Goodwin spoke recently to* NEA Today *assistant editor Stefanie Weiss.*

An FDR memorial will be unveiled in Washington soon. Why has it taken so long?

For the past 30 or 40 years, historians have ranked Roosevelt among the nation's top two or three Presidents. Still, the emotions that FDR generated during his Presidency were so powerful that for years the Republicans in Congress were unwilling to think about a memorial. It took, as I understand it, Ronald Reagan, who had adored Roosevelt as a child, to finally get the appropriations through Congress.

What have you uncovered about the Roosevelts that you'd like teachers to know?

Probably the most important thing was the extent to which the partnership between Franklin and Eleanor really made his Presidency much stronger. The connections between the two of them—the affection, the respect, and the way they worked with one another—really did have a huge impact on society at that time.

During World War II, when Roosevelt's attention rightly had to be focused on putting the Allied forces together to win the war, it was left to Eleanor to make sure that the war did not reverse the progress that had been made during the 1930s, and, on the contrary, that the war became a vehicle for social reform at home.

What did you learn about the Roosevelts that you didn't know?

I hadn't realized the kinds of complicated personal lives they both had to lead. I really hadn't absorbed the extent of Roosevelt's disability—I didn't know what he was fighting against day-by-day, not even being able to get out of bed in the morning without his valet helping him into the bathroom.

I hadn't absorbed fully the kind of loneliness that Eleanor carried with her all of her life. Nor had I understood the full nature of the working partnership between them. I always assumed their marriage was somewhat dead after the affair that FDR had with Lucy Mercer so many years before. But I came to discover that they still had enormous affection and respect and love for one another.

UPI/Bettmann

Were the American people as divided about Eleanor's role as Americans seem to be about Hillary Clinton?

There's no doubt that Eleanor endured substantial criticism, particularly for her stand on civil rights. Still, Gallup polls at the time showed that she had an 80 to 90 percent approval rating, which shows that somehow the majority of the people had come to accept that this very outspoken, independent woman was speaking authentically about what she believed in.

What's the difference between the way Eleanor and Hillary have approached social change?

Eleanor mobilized support from the outside. In a certain sense, she was a voice for people who didn't have access to power—poor people, Blacks, women, coal miners, migrant workers. She brought their concerns to Washington. Hillary chose to be right at the center of the policy-making structure, which the public still seems unwilling to accept.

Do you think the Roosevelt legacy is unraveling?

Certainly one could argue that pieces of it are under attack. But the power that FDR created for the United States in the world still exists today. The successful prosecution of the war ending Hitler's scourge is a legacy that will always be with us. And there's still a consensus that government has a responsibility in times of economic need to help people out. That hadn't been accepted before the New Deal came into place.

How can educators make World War II relevant to today's kids?

It's so important for young people to realize where America was in 1940 and where we ended up in 1945. So many people look at the world today and see so many problems that seem unsolvable. But when they look back at the 1940s, they can see things were much more difficult then.

We were 18th in military power in 1940. Germany had six million soldiers under arms in 1940—we had half a million. It didn't look like we would be able to catch up, much less conquer, Germany. And yet, once democracy got mobilized, once this country pulled together, we were able to achieve more than anyone could ever have imagined.

When people look at problems today, there is such a lack of belief that collective action can produce change—but obviously it can.

Resources

- The Committee for Roosevelt History Month, 202/857-7810, E-mail: FDRHIST@aol.com.
- The FDR Memorial Commission, 825-A Hart Office Building, Washington, DC 20510, 202/228-2491.
- *FDR*, a multimedia CD-ROM. $40. For details, contact Corbis Corporation, 800/246-2065, http://www.corbis.com.

Debate

Should you confront a colleague who isn't performing?

Yes

Margaret Lawrence teaches African-American studies and world geography at Istrouma Senior High and Technology Academy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. An Association activist, she's currently secretary of the East Baton Rouge Association of Educators.

To ignore a colleague who's not performing well is to make a mockery of our profession. When one teacher is in trouble, it reflects on all of us.

We educators need to present a united front to our students, principals, and communities that says we're all in this together—we're all here to help one another help students.

In my more than 20 years of classroom experience, I've found that it's usually the inexperienced teachers who have the most problems. Knowing this, I work to head off difficult situations before they occur.

Since I was trained by my state department of education to mentor new teachers, I let the beginners know early on that I'm available to help them in any way I can.

Unfortunately, some beginning teachers have been ill-prepared by their teacher education programs. I've seen some teachers who are clearly in shock when they realize that all the theory in the world won't help them manage a class full of teenagers.

I've seen some inexperienced teachers who have great plans on paper, but can't execute them. Their practice falls short because they don't know their students' capabilities, cultural backgrounds, or talents.

I've seen many inexperienced teachers make the mistake of being too permissive and too friendly. These teachers try to become a student's peer—and are often stunned to be treated badly in return.

These beginners need our help—and many welcome it. But even those who don't seem to want assistance shouldn't be left to go it alone. It's always good to let them know—as tactfully as possible—that help is available.

At the beginning of each school year, my school administration pairs each teacher new to the school with one who has been here a while. We veterans mentor the newcomers throughout the year.

In addition, I work to create informal teams of school personnel to deal with students who are discipline problems. On the first day of school, I seek out beginning teachers—especially those not in my discipline—to compare student enrollment charts.

If a problem arises with one student, I include all of his or her teachers in a parent conference. If I call the parents, I inform all the student's teachers. If I talk to the administration about the situation, I invite the student's other teachers to join me.

When approaching inexperienced—or veteran—teachers who seem to be having trouble, technique is key. There is no room for insensitivity or hurt feelings.

It can help to make an appointment with a teacher before or after school to talk about a joint concern. It won't help to talk things over in a crowded teachers' lounge.

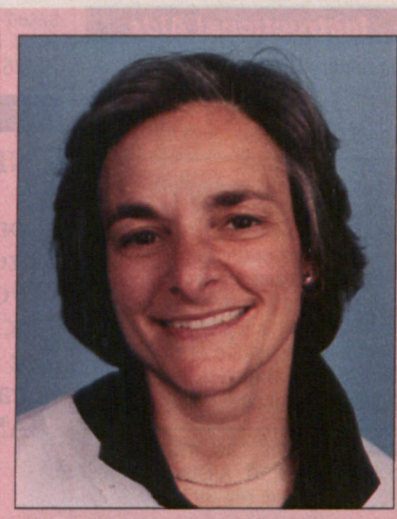
It can help to enlist the help of others. Sometimes social workers, school psychologists, or conflict resolution specialists can help new teachers work with problem students.

It always helps to offer compliments when you see a teacher's efforts pay off and student behavior and achievement show improvement.

Bottom line: When I see a teacher in trouble, I step in. That's my job as a professional. These days, we all need all the help we can get.

No

Rosemarie DeAngelis is a speech/language clinician who teaches language learning disabled students in South Portland, Maine. She also chairs the MEA Benefits Trust, a corporation that designs and administers health benefits for educators and their dependents.



It's simply not our job to approach a colleague who's not performing. We're not paid to do it, we're not hired to do it, and we're not authorized to do it.

Confronting colleagues about their performance is a treacherous and fractious practice—one that drains any union of its strength.

Let's first consider who we are and what that means. We're educators, all working for the quality education of all children. At the same time, we're all members of the same union—and it's our union's job to safeguard all members' rights equally.

How can a union safeguard all members if one contributes to the firing of another? How can union members work together if one evaluates another? How can a union achieve strength if certain behaviors pit union member against union member?

Let's not be naive. Most union-busting activities start subtly and inconspicuously. Nonetheless, they undermine the potency of unity and erode the sense of teamwork.

I know that unions are uniformly attacked as the protector of "bad teachers" and the barrier to "removing the dead wood." But we all know that the notion that unions provide asylum to mediocrity is absurd.

When was the last time you heard an educator say, "Boy, I'd really like to have a lousy teacher next door to me. I'd get to have his students after he does a lousy job. And I'd be pleased to know that damage was being done to the image of the entire teaching profession." Poppycock!

Educators and educators' unions want quality professionals in every classroom. I believe there are two ways of making that ideal a reality.

First, every local Association must go to the bargaining table and demand quality evaluations for all educators.

If there's a teacher in your building who's not up to snuff, shouldn't the educational leader in the building—the principal—claim title to that task?

Isn't it legitimate to presume that principals know which educators are doing a remarkable job—and which ones aren't?

Beyond identifying those who need help, isn't it legitimate to expect that principals will provide help to those who aren't up to snuff?

We must insist that the evaluation process is not a pretense, but a valid testimony and a quality assessment tool. We must insist that the process is fair, non-discriminatory, and truly measures what it claims to measure. If that were the case, colleagues confronting colleagues wouldn't even be an issue.

A second way to ensure a quality teaching force is to involve teachers in the hiring process. If those of us who know best what's required of a good teacher were involved in selecting our peers, there'd be little need for "house cleaning."

In the meantime, we must not lose sight of the meaning of the word "union." It means one, it means unity for the good of the whole.

Let's be cautious about behaving in ways that suggest we are eager to kick our feet up on the same side of the desk with those who now hire and fire us.

Management has a job to do. Let them show us they can do it.

Give Us Your Opinion

Which debater best reflects where you stand? To agree with the "Yes" side, send an E-mail message to **vote-yes@neatoday.nea.org.** To record a "No," address your E-mail to **vote-no@neatoday.nea.org.** Please note your message subject as **NEA Today October Debate.** Vote by October 7. *NEA Today* will present the tally in the November issue.

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Science, Society, and America's Nuclear Waste, a free curriculum, is available from the Department of Energy's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. The second edition includes a teacher's guide and student reader. Other publications are available. 800/225-6972 or find them at http://www.ymp.gov.

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Teacher/principal jobs available. SASE to NTC, Box 267, Boston, MA 02117; 617/267-3204.

Education Jobs-Nationwide New lists weeks. K-12 & college. All subjects. Send SASE to NESC., Dept., NEA, POB 1279, Riverton, WY 82501. 307/856-0170.

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Conference

What are some positive outcomes for school-to-work proposals or ongoing initiatives? What are the critical issues that need to be resolved? What are the barriers? A panel of educators addressed these questions at the November 1995 Joint Conference on Transition from School-to-Work in Orlando, Florida. Please contact NEA's Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education (CRUE) for copies and information on the November 1996 conference at 202/822-7015; fax 202/822-7997 or internet: NEACRUE1@aol.com.

Publications

Community Partnership Leaflets. This series of leaflets, "Become A Productive Volunteer," "Helping Children Lead Drug Free Lives," "Discipline Begins at Home," "Helping Your Children Succeed in School," "Reading and Television," and "Teenagers and Successful School Careers" provides useful tips and resources for teachers to share with parents and the community. Please contact NEA's Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education (CRUE) for copies and information at 202/822-7155 or fax it to 202/822-7997, or internet: NEACrue@aol.com.

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Conferences/Meetings

The NEA Executive Committee meeting will be held in Washington, DC, October 7-8, 1996.

The NEA Board of Directors meeting will be held in Washington, DC, October 11-12, 1996.

The NEA Executive Committee will meet in Washington, DC, November 4-5, 1996.

November 8-9, 1996 an NEA All Committee Meeting will be held in Washington, DC.

The NEA Retirement and Benefits Forum will meet in Baltimore, MD, November 13-17, 1996.

The NEA Executive Committee, will meet in Washington, DC, December 9-10, 1996.

The NEA Board of Directors will meet in Washington, DC December 13-14, 1996.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Leadership Conference will meet in Columbus, Ohio January 17-19, 1997.

The NEA Western Regional Leadership Conference will be held in Denver, Colorado January 17-19, 1997.

The NEA Mid-western Regional Leadership Conference will be held in Dearborn, Michigan, January 24-26, 1997.

The NEA Northeastern Regional Leadership Conference will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 31 - February 12, 1997.

The Southeastern Regional Leadership Conference will be held in Washington, DC February 7-9, 1997.

The NEA Executive Committee will meeting in Washington, DC February 10-11, 1997.

The NEA Board of Directors will meet in Washington, DC February 14-15, 1997.

The NEA Pacific States Regional Leadership Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon February 21-23, 1997.

The NEA Resolutions Committee (Internal Editing), will meet in Washington, DC February 25-26, 1997.

The NEA Resolutions Committee (Full Committee), will meet in Washington, DC February 25-26, 1997.

The NEA Resolutions Committee (Full Committee) will meet in Washington, DC February 26-March 1, 1997.

The NEA Higher Education Conference will meet in California, March 7-9, 1997.

The NEA Educational Support Conference will meet March 21-23, 1997. To be announced.

The NEA Executive Committee will meet in Washington, DC March 24-25, 1997.

The NEA National Conference Series - To be announced.

The NEA Executive Committee will meet in Washington, DC March 28-29, 1997.

The NEA Board of Directors will meet in Washington, DC May 2-3, 1997.

The NEA Executive Committee will meet June 16-17, 1997 in Washington, DC.

NEA's Annual Meeting will be held in Atlanta, Georgia July 1-6, 1997.

NEA's Representative Assembly will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, July 3-6, 1997.

The NEA State Leaders Workshop will be held at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, July 18-22, 1997.

Health Resources

You can help eradicate breast cancer with **one** phone call! Call 800/NBCC-838 and join the National Breast Cancer Coalition's **Campaign 2.6**—a signature campaign to collect 2.6 million signatures on a petition to the President and Congress asking that they appropriate $2.6 billion for quality breast cancer research between now and the year 2000. Join us! The National Breast Cancer Coalition is a grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to eradicating breast cancer through action and advocacy. 1707 L Street, NW, Suite 1060, Washington DC 20036/202/296-7477; fax: 202/265-6854 http://www.natlbcc.org

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Have you written a book, developed an instructional aid, or created a software program? Do you organize trips to interesting places or conduct seminars?

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1201 16th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036
202/822-7913.

Books

Which Way to Reform?

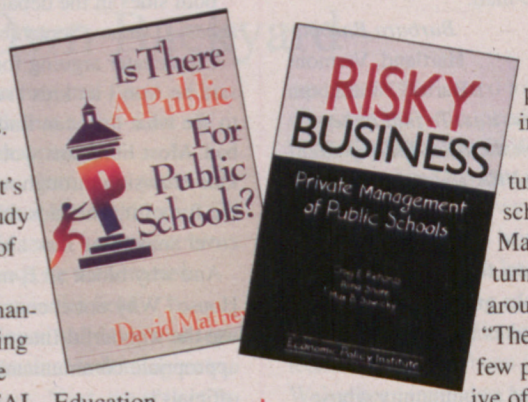
Rebuild a public for public schools—or seek private sector solutions? Two books, one direction.

Risky Business: Private Management of Public Schools
Craig E. Richards, Rima Shore, and Max B. Sawicky. *Economic Policy Institute, 240 pp., $19.95*

Is There a Public for Public Schools?
David Mathews. *Kettering Foundation Press, 81 pp., $9.50*

If principals, parents, teachers, and school boards can't get failing public schools to turn around, why not give someone else a try? If they can make a profit at it, why not let them?

What do you say when someone asks "why not?" What do you do when you've asked yourself the very same question? You check out a couple of powerful new books that provide compelling and disarming answers.



Read *Risky Business* first. It's an academic study of the practice of contracting out public school management, focusing primarily on the experience of EAI—Education Alternatives, Inc.—in nine Baltimore schools.

After analyzing spending patterns, financial practices, and classroom innovations, its authors come to a conclusion that's hard to dispute.

"Despite higher levels of per-pupil spending and significant investments in program enhancements, none of the recent privatization efforts has, thus far, produced clear-cut gains in student achievement." In sum, if your school board is looking for "proven innovations or demonstrated cost savings, contracting is the wrong option."

So what's the right option? Read David Mathews's *Is There a Public for Public Schools?* It's a short, hard look at what it'll take to recreate a base of support for public schools in this country.

If you want to turn public schools around, Mathews argues, turn the public around first. "There may be so few people supportive of the idea of public schools," Mathews writes, "that school reform may need to be recast as community building. In other words, certain things may have to happen in our communities before we can see the improvement we want in our schools."

The bulk of Mathews's book is a list of ways to construct "a healthy public life" in our communities, which he acknowledges is a tall order. "Still," he writes, "there is no escaping the logic which insists that public schools can't exist without publics."

The moral of these two stories: The right course of action is never easy. Read one for retorts, the other for answers.

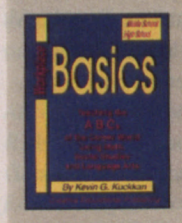
—*Stefanie Weiss*

Books by NEA Members

Hiawatha Passing

Jeff Hagen. Illustrated by Kenneth Shue. *Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 32 pp., $15.95.* A gorgeous children's book about the sights and sounds of a high-speed train passing in the night.

ABC Women Artists
Martyna Bellessis and Francita Agostino. *Each volume $17, set $30.* Great female artists listed from A to Z in an activity book for students in the elementary grades. Biographical information on artists included. Call 812/339-0235.



Workplace Basics
Kevin Kuckkan. *Creative Educational Publishing, 56 pp., $15.95 plus s&h.* Classroom-tested activities designed to make learning relevant to life after school. A second volume, *Career Basics*, sells for $17.95. Call 800/517-1128.

NEA Professional Library Top 10 List

1 *Integrated Thematic Teaching.* NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Six stories from teachers who are successfully interweaving disciplines into a tapestry that makes the curriculum come alive. (#2909-7-10-FB)

2 *Building Parent Partnerships.* NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Get this book if you want to explore new ways to involve today's families in their children's learning. (#2911-9-10-FB)

3 *Multiple Intelligences.* NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Find out how your colleagues are adapting their teaching strategies to take advantage of the seven intelligences. (#2910-0-10-FB)

4 *The First-Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K-8),* Bosch & Kersey. ($14.95) The ultimate first-year teacher's handbook. A perfect gift for a new colleague. (#1862-1-10-FB)

5 *Countdown to the First Day of School,* Schell & Burden. ($4.50) A "must-have" checklist for every beginning elementary teacher. (#2150-9-10-FB)

6 *Inspiring Discipline: A Practical Guide for Today's Classrooms,* Merrill Harmin. ($12.95) Teachers say they want how-to materials on discipline, and this book delivers. (#2950-X-10-FB)

7 *Student Portfolios*. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Insights from your colleagues on how to use portfolios to assess and enhance student learning. (#2901-1-10-FB)

8 *Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students,* Nan Stein & Lisa Sjostrom. ($15.95) "Bullyproof" your classroom with these teacher-tested lessons. (#1873-7-10-FB)

9 *At-Risk, Low-Achieving Students in the Classroom,* Lehr & Harris. ($9.95) When some of these ideas were tried by teachers at a South Carolina elementary school, student test scores showed remarkable improvement. (#3338-8-10-FB)

10 *Innovative Discipline.* NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Elementary and secondary teachers say these discipline strategies can improve the whole culture of your school. (#2904-6-10-FB)

This month's rankings show the NEA Professional Library bestsellers at the 1996 Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C. All the books listed above are published by the NEA Professional Library, a service for NEA members financed solely by the sale of books and other professional development materials to the education community.

How To Order

To order any NEA Professional Library bestseller—or to receive a free catalog of Professional Library titles—call

800/229-4200

The prices listed are NEA member prices. A shipping/handling charge will be added to each order.

Letters

Looking Good

I just received my copy of the September issue, and I must commend you on the improved look and expanded coverage. In the past, I've browsed most, but not all, issues sometime during the month. But today, in the middle of a busy first week of school, I read nearly the entire issue and made many notes of items to share with my colleagues.

I especially appreciated the "Talk Back" article (Cover story) and the accompanying resources. We all need to learn some strategies for supporting public education. Colorado teacher Frank Mosher's ideas were worth adopting.

Keep up the good work.

Glenna Denman
Los Lunas, New Mexico
BDenman194@aol.com

Your new look is quality. A few things I particularly liked:

"Innovators" spans the educational community from nationally recognized leaders to classroom teachers. That sends a powerful message.

The Learning section covers the gamut of topics that both teachers and support staff need to be informed.

The continual use of E-mail and Internet addresses gives us the chance to make important contacts and get more information.

The tips on countering teacher-bashing are well timed and valuable.

The "Books by NEA Members" column recognizes often uncelebrated member talents and skills—a great idea!

J.P. Roden
Vernon, Connecticut
jproden@ix.netcom.com

Great job on the newspaper. I appreciate the Learning section and the "Hallway Humor." Thanks for your efforts to determine what might help us—and thanks for handing it to us on a beautiful silver platter.

Is *NEA Today* available on America Online? I'd like to send articles to my colleagues via E-mail.

Barbara Barbour
Hartland, Vermont
BBarb712@aol.com

Editor's note: Yes, it is. To find it, keyword: NEA, open the NEA Today folder, and click on the NEA Today Article Archive.

While the new format of our publication looks great, the change to slick paper makes it unsuitable for recycling.

As a member of a community whose landfill is approaching capacity, this matters to me! I feel strongly that our profession must lead by example—including modeling how to minimize environmental impact on the Earth.

Lauren Rice
Sacramento, California

Editor's note: NEA Today *is printed on recycled paper and is recyclable.*

What's Inside?

The contents page in your September issue set me up for disappointment. You wrote: "This month spotlights how kids are learning in an Arizona multi-age classroom." But after reading the magazine once and carefully looking at each page twice, I found only a picture of four girls from a multi-age classroom in Arizona.

I was very disappointed that the lovely picture told me nothing about how multi-age classes are run, how much the teachers had to fight the district to make them happen, or what results they are seeing among their students.

Erin Lewis
Sierra Madre, California
ELewismorr@aol.com

Editor's note: We regret the error. For more information on multi-age classes, check out NEA Today*'s May 1996 cover story, "Age Doesn't Matter."*

Middle Ground

I disagree with key points expressed by both sides in the debate over Internet access (Debate, September).

The debater arguing for restrictions said he won't let kids "surf the Web just to see what they can find." That's too bad. Most librarians would love to see kids browsing through materials just for the fun of it. The kids might even discover something new and interesting!

And why block all E-mail to the White House? Why not encourage students to use the wonderful Internet highway for appropriate communication with elected officials?

The other debater's laissez-fair approach is naive. His method is analogous to a school librarian stocking shelves with all manner of materials—from Plato to pornography, Hemingway to *Hustler*—without discretion. Isn't it better to keep the obvious porn out of the building in the first place?

We definitely need some degree of control over what our students can access on the Internet. But, at the same time, let's not stifle their creativity or citizenship.

Kenneth Graham
Avon, Connecticut

Start Being Teachers

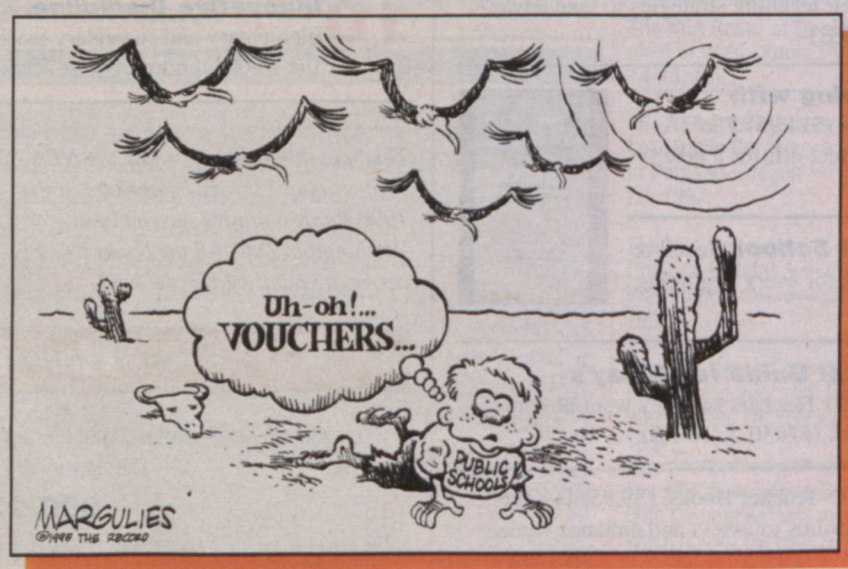
I had to laugh when I read the "you-have-to-work-harder-to-teach-troublemakers" letters (Letters, September). When are teachers going to stop being social workers and start being teachers?

This is the same old self-esteem line that has gotten us into the trouble we're in today. The *C* student, the backbone of our labor force, can't get a good education because the troublemakers are getting all the money.

Become a real troublemaker, and you're punished by getting shorter hours, computers, field trips, and more. Meanwhile, back at the school where kids are trying their best, we don't have books, computers, supplies, or small classes.

I'm tired to seeing good students shortchanged so that social workers and psychologists can build their little kingdoms. Let's return the schools to the teachers and the students who want to learn.

Lou Meyer
Sacramento, California



I wonder if the obviously concerned, but sadly misled members who wrote in have taken the time to think of the message they are sending to the "troublemakers" they are protecting and the good students they are unintentionally penalizing.

I always thought I earned my big teaching bucks for doing my best to teach a subject. They never told me that my salary was directly proportional to the number of "hard-to-teach students" I could handle, or for the "teaching strategies" my association with them would force me to generate.

One author selflessly uses his lunch hour to reteach what he couldn't get across during regular class time because the poor "lumps" in his class prevented him from doing so. Did it ever occur to him that he was actually holding his own "alternative class" for "selected students"?

Come on, people! Letting kids get away with "attitude" and making excuses for it fosters what is so pervasively dangerous in our society as it is: the idea that wrongdoers don't do wrong; they simply "make mistakes."

Katherine Norberg
Arcadia, California

Give Me More

I read with interest your articles on NEA-supported professional development school partnerships in Brookline, Massachusetts (Cover story, February) and in Waco, Texas (Innovation, May).

I find it most appropriate that the NEA reform agenda focus on collaborative innovations that highlight changing the training of pre-service teachers, while also providing continuous professional development for in-service practitioners. I'd appreciate additional information concerning NEA's Teacher Education Initiative and Professional Development School Network.

Emma Klimek
Walworth, New York

Editor's note: The Professional Development School Network, a cluster of innovative schools dedicated to the preparation of new teachers, is accepting applicants. NEA members interested in joining with local colleges to help train new teachers and provide

A Letter From: Rhode Island

Going Fishing in Your Own Backyard

Our students get to see real cadavers, wander through a prosthetics lab, observe brain surgery, explore the inside of an ambulance, and ask some of the nation's top medical experts questions.

Despite what you might think, we don't teach medical school, and we don't work on the set of "ER." We teach a course called "Bio-related Technologies" to teenagers at Burrillville High School in Rhode Island.

Burrillville's a great place to live, idyllic even. It's got rolling hills, good fishing, a beautiful rink for ice hockey enthusiasts—and that's just about everyone here. It's that combination so many Northeasterners covet—a rural, residential community that's a stone's throw from the ocean and a reasonable commute to Worcester, Providence, and Boston.

Burrillville's also a great place to teach. If you have the support of parents, the administration, the community, the school committee—and we've been blessed with that here—a lot of great things can happen.

Like this course. Just a few years ago, we got together to develop a course that would teach kids about biotechnology and expose them to new career possibilities in the field.

First we developed solid units on topics from environmental technologies to cardiovascular ones. Next, we set out to establish ties with the best possible people in local industry.

The experience was an eye-opener. We were amazed at what people are willing to do if you ask them.

One day, we called Brown University's department chair for biology. He referred us to Dr. Ted Goslow in the anatomy department, so we called him up. He was more than happy to help. With his cooperation, our students get to see—and learn from—real cadavers.

A neurosurgeon from Rhode Island Hospital told us about a new piece of equipment that's used to operate on what used to be inoperable brain cancer. It's called a gamma knife, and Rhode Island Hospital has one of only a very few in existence. All we did was ask—and now the surgeon brings equipment to our class. He even lets students observe his operating room technique.

People who handle environmental technologies have been just as open. We've been invited to tour the state landfill, visit an incinerator, and check out the reservoir that provides drinking water to the entire area.

The city planner works with our students to help us develop a model for what a town of the future should look like. Johnson & Johnson gives the kids a phenomenal tour, explaining each step in the development of prosthetics. And the local emergency medical technicians wheel their ambulances right up to the school's front door.

As a result of all this outreach, the kids get hands-on, real-world experience. They get to ask the questions they want to ask, like "How do you like your job?", "What kind of training did you get?", and the inevitable "How much money do you make?" Some kids follow up with internships. Quite a few leave with a definite direction in mind.

As teachers, we've learned that no matter where you live, you have access to a wealth of knowledge. You may not live next to a major university, but you have a city planner. You have a hospital. You have a department of environmental management.

We've learned that if you want to make instruction relevant, the only thing that limits you is the amount of time you bring to the task.

At Burrillville High, Marilyn Kelley, R.N., is a school nurse/teacher, and Charles Boucher is department chair for technology. Both are members of the Burrillville Teachers Association.

in-service opportunities for veteran ones should contact Sylvia Seidel, NEA National Center for Innovation, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-7906.

Special Edition

I thoroughly enjoyed the special edition of *NEA Today* for support employees. I use the magazine at the start of the school year to recruit new members, to show them the kinds of activities that other support employees across the nation are involved in.

Thanks for the good work. Wish we could have more throughout the year.

Wayne Barnes
Ronda, North Carolina
NCESPA3@aol.com

The special edition for ESP members included a lot about what support staffers would like to do in the future, what they do outside of work, and how they've handle on-the-job incidents. But it didn't say much about what people actually do day-to-day.

Working second shift, I don't ever get to meet the food service or transportation or office employees. I'd like to see more on what they do—and more on ESP members, in general—in future issue of *NEA Today*.

Ted Birren
Arlington Heights, Illinois
tbirren@falcon.dist214.k12.il.us

Your special issue for education support members was spectacular! But why was it only sent to ESP members? Isn't it important to include everyone in the education family? Isn't it important to encourage all NEA members to appreciate the positive contribution support staffers make?

I take Bob Chase's message in the magazine to heart: Let's all work together as the National Education Association.

Amy Jackson
Lake Bluff, Illinois

Editor's note: The special edition of NEA Today *for education support employees is available to any NEA member who requests one (see box for how to contact us). The cost of printing and mailing a copy to every member is prohibitive.*

What's Missing?

The national governor's education summit held last spring (National News, May) produced a consensus among the governors and President Clinton that this nation's school systems need new standards, assessments, and accountabilities. But something was missing.

Precious little, if anything, was said about having higher standards for principals, superintendents, school boards, and, above all, parents.

Teachers have no more to work with than what parents and guardians send them. Teachers can do no more than what local administrators and school board members allow them to do. That means teachers are in a box—but still suffer from the pile-on criticism that Mary can't do math and Ronnie can't read.

It's time for concerned Americans to place the standards issue where it belongs—and that's in the laps of administrators, school boards, and parents. Teachers have taken the blame long enough.

James Peterson
Wolf Point, Montana

Teach, Don't Preach

NEA delegates have adopted a large variety of worthy resolutions (NEA Resolutions, September). I believe, however, that NEA resolutions should be restricted to education-related issues. Asking for severe penalties for criminal actions involving guns and other deadly weapons in school settings is, of course, an education-related issue.

But NEA resolutions should not presume to speak for all members on issues about which individual members do not agree, such as abortion, homosexuality, and gun control.

Individual teachers are quite capable of joining other organizations that do represent their views on these controversial issues.

Jan Webster
Solon, Iowa

Rather than try to influence me and deprive me of my right to own or have access to a firearm, I suggest that you endorse the Eddie Eagle program offered by the National Rifle Association in every school. That would further the educational process more than an attempt to strangle the Second Amendment.

Jon Shoop
Defiance, Missouri
shoop19@MO.NET

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- ✔ By mail: Write to Letters, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.
- ✔ By FAX: 202/822-7206.
- ✔ By phone: 202/822-7201.
- ✔ By NEA Online: Keyword NEA Today. To subscribe to NEA Online, call 800/781-5577.
- ✔ By E-mail. Write to NEAToday@aol.com.

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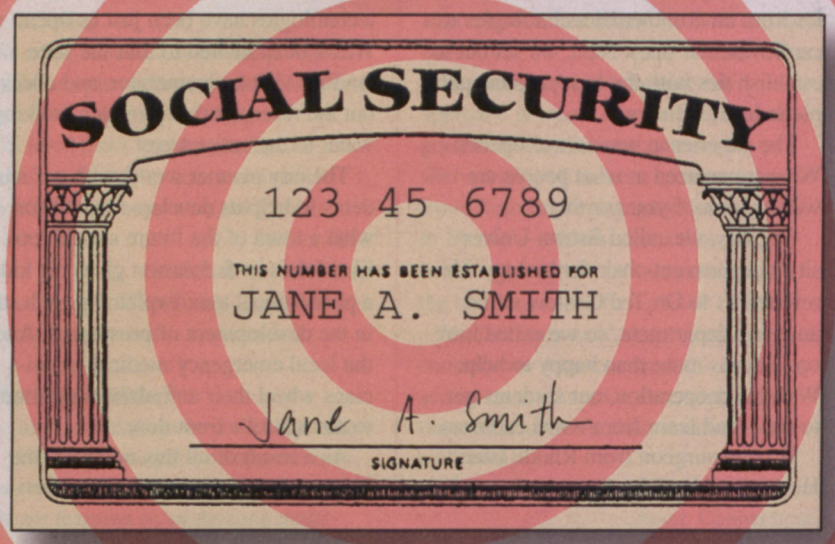

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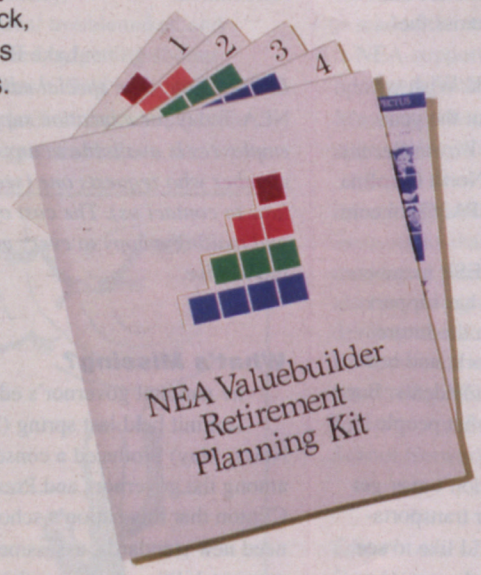

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responds to your needs

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NEA Member Benefits provides a wide range of programs that help improve the overall quality of life for our members and their families

Take advantage of these programs. Give yourself the opportunity to reduce your everyday expenses and enhance your financial security. Let NEA Member Benefits put the collective buying power of more than two million NEA members to work for you.

At NEA Member Benefits, we respond to your needs. For more information on any program listed, just detach and mail the coupon—no postage needed. Or call toll free:

1-800-637-4636

(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET).

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Look for the NEA Member Benefits logo

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This endorsement is your guarantee that NEA Member Benefits programs provide you and your family with an exceptional combination of quality, value and service. It also assures you that each program has been exclusively developed for the needs of NEA members and is not available to the general public.

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